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Emsworth Residents Forum
Community Newspaper

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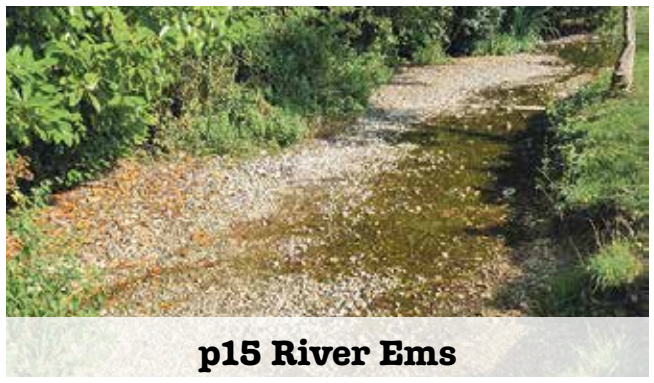

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Emsworth Community Centre

One Year after the Fire

Words by Richard Stepien, Chair of Emsworth Community Association

The roof fire in March 2025 resulted in a devastating impact for Centre members and users. Late evening the enormity of the disaster struck home, when the fire chief handed the burnt-out buildings to the Centre Manager saying, "You are now responsible for the site". Tears were held back as this was really an awful moment! The successful evacuation, resulting in no casualties, then gave us a different perspective on how much worse it could have been.

An official opening day to mark the opening of the refurbished assembly rooms will be held on Tuesday, 5 May 2026. Drinks and nibbles will be provided to celebrate the event and everybody - users, members, hirers and the public - is invited. Most importantly, we wish to praise and say thank you to all who gave us their support

Firstly, praise to Hampshire Fire Service, who saved the remaining building and those of our neighbours. Their feedback was a compliment on our compliance with fire regulations and this reflected on the high standards for building regulations previously maintained by Hampshire County Council. That evening, when the damaged building needed to be secured with electrics and new alarms, KB Electrics with Phil Leggett worked all night to provide this requirement. We also later called on Steve Dolling to restore our electrical modifications and new circuits.

The business of deconstruction, reconstruction and refurbishment with decision on costings involved our insurers Aviva, represented by Tony Teague. We are indebted to his informative manner and continuous and regular contact dealing with these matters.

David Payne, Director with Aspray, represented the Centre as Loss Assessor and became our project manager calling in contractors Acorn Valley to rebuild the damaged parts of the Community Centre. His role as a lynchpin on all proceedings with work on the building continues to be invaluable and deserves great credit.

The Centre Manager, Ann Odea, became the main link between the insurers, brokers, loss assessor and the various contractors. This pivotal role in proceedings is gratefully recognised. She adds: "The fire was an emotional and challenging moment for everyone connected with the Centre, but the response from staff, volunteers and the wider community has been extraordinary. We are immensely grateful for the support we have received and we remain fully committed to restoring and enhancing this vital community space. The emerging rebuild is giving us renewed optimism for the Centre's future".

Rebuilding of the fire damaged building is nearly complete

Apologies to users of the car park and for the inconvenience caused by reduced spaces. Also, apologies to all who lost their bookings and needed to go elsewhere, to rearrange times or wait until completion of works. Our neighbours, particularly Liz, adjusted without complaints to the upheaval and noise of scaffolders and contractors overlooking her house and garden, showing remarkable stoicism. Grateful thanks to the Men's Shed who raised funds to replace the planting troughs, complete with soil and new flowers.

Bookings and availability of the Assembly Rooms are available from the Office on 01243 373805.

Official opening

We will be holding an official opening of the Assembly rooms on Tuesday 5th May 19.30 - refreshments will be served.

ERF Public Meeting Dates

All residents are welcome to attend our public meetings.

Election Hustings – Emsworth Baptist Church
Tuesday 28 April. Refreshments available from 6.30 pm. Meeting starts 7 pm. A chance to meet all of the candidates standing for Emsworth in the Havant BC and Hampshire CC elections.

Annual General Meeting of Emsworth Residents Forum – Emsworth Community Centre
Thursday 11 June. Refreshments available from 6.30 pm. Meeting starts 7 pm. Special guest speakers.

Development

Southleigh – public consultation held by Bloor Homes

A developer proposing to build a 1,800-home community in Havant has faced calls from residents and councillors to build a link road to alleviate road congestion and gridlock. At the meeting held on 27 Jan at HBC offices, attended by more than 150 residents, councillors heard the initial proposals from housebuilder Bloor Homes, which has dropped plans to provide a link road in its Southleigh Strategic Site masterplan.

Bloor Homes laid out its proposal, which also includes a local centre, a three-form entry primary school, early years provision, community park, community open space, and infrastructure promoting active travel with cycle and pedestrian paths, along with a proposed bus service. The aim of the meeting was to identify all the issues that need to be considered for an outline planning application to be submitted in a few months.

The site sits between Denvilles and Emsworth, north of the A27 and railway line, and south of Southleigh House, Spire Hospital, and The Oaks Havant Crematorium.

Southleigh Road passes through the site from west to east. Rebecca Fenn-Tripp from Bloor Homes said government policy has shifted since the site was first proposed. She said: "Whether you agree with it or not, this is the position. The government is not looking to invest or increase capacity at major road junctions."

110 more houses for Southbourne

Application 25/03010 has been made by Hallam Land to Chichester DC for outline planning application for the construction of 110 new dwellings. The site is at land to the north of Gosden Green, Main Road, Southbourne. The site consists of an 8.5 hectare arable field which currently forms a gap between housing developments at Hermitage and Southbourne. The site goes up as far as the railway and is close to Tuppenny Barn educational centre. It will also be adjacent to the proposed development of 84 houses to the north of Penny Lane.

More development at Fiscal House, Havant Road

Application APP/26/00006 has been made to HBC for the demolition of existing storage out-buildings, to be rebuilt and enlarged, providing a studio space for the attached new gym and storage space for the yard, along with associated works.

The Fiscal House site re-opened in September 2025 as a fully equipped gym.

Mary Puppins appeal fails

The High St pet shop put in an application in 2025 (APP/25/00700) for change of use of Unit 1, Palmers Rd Industrial Estate from B2 (manufacturing and repairs) to E (retail). This was refused but went to appeal (AP-0361) The planning inspector has now refused this appeal on the grounds that HBC was correct in wanting to keep this unit for manufacturing/repair use.

No sewers at Highgrove, Bosham

Southern Water has confirmed that they are currently unable to link the Highgrove development into the main sewage disposal system so the developer is seeking release from the Planning App condition which requires connection before occupation. (26/00323/FUL) The developer is proposing to use a tank which would be emptied each week as a temporary solution to allow the first 30 houses to be occupied immediately. The delay seems to be caused by SGN working on gas pipes in the vicinity of where the connection to the main sewer will be made.

A protest was held near the Highgrove site on Sat 14 March. Highgrove is a development of 300 houses by David Wilson Homes (Part of the Barratt group) near Highgrove Farm on the north side of the A259 just east of the Broad Bridge roundabout. The original planning application was submitted in 2021 (21/00571/FUL). Chichester DC were still considering the application (which comprises over 1000 documents) in 2023 when Barratts went to appeal. The planning inspector approved the application in November 2023.

Long Copse Lane – More Difficult Times Ahead

Words by The Save Long Copse Lane Team

Despite the withdrawal of the recent planning application by Land & Partners, the Long Copse Lane (LCL) site remains allocated in the Draft Local Plan. All six landowners' plots continue to be promoted for housing, meaning the threat of development has not gone away.

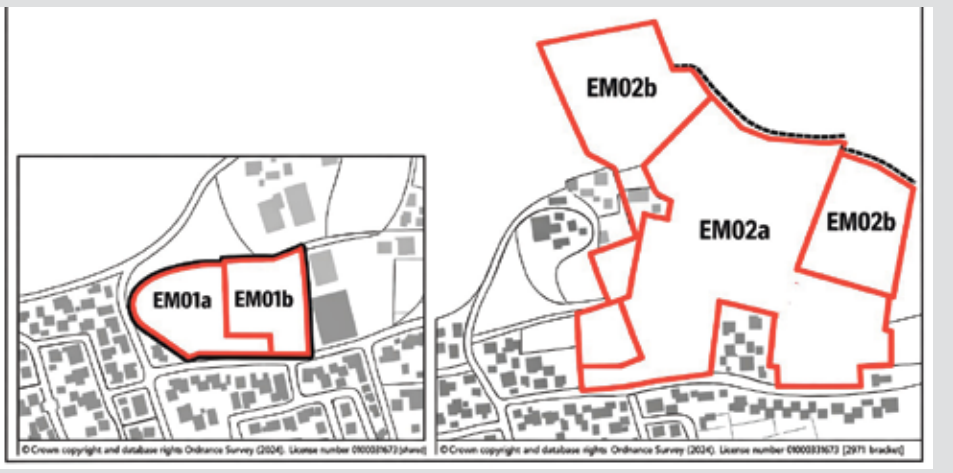
We share the HBC Leader's concerns about the impact of additional traffic from large new developments. The strain on local roads is already clear whenever incidents on the A27 divert vehicles through Emsworth and Westbourne. Any development on the LCL site would add further pressure across the town.

Southleigh Road is a particular worry. Traffic levels are rising, safety concerns are increasing at its many junctions, and delays accessing the A27 are becoming routine. Air-quality issues at the railway crossing and around Warblington School are also worsening.

We support efforts to restore water quality in Chichester Harbour and recognise that upgrading Thornham Wastewater Treatment Works is essential. However, Southern Water's current funding priorities focus on increasing capacity and protecting shellfish beds. The measures needed to reduce nitrates are not yet funded. Until this is resolved, development on the LCL site remains constrained.

In February 2026, HBC published its updated Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). This includes a western parcel promoted for 50 homes by two landowners, and an eastern parcel where the remaining four landowners are promoted by two land agents. The proposed capacity for the eastern site has risen from 210 to 275 homes. These expanded proposals are expected to reappear in the next version of the Draft Local Plan.

The Save LCL team remains firmly of the view that the Long Copse Lane site should be removed from the Local Plan altogether. Securing that outcome will be our focus in the months ahead.



Under consideration

At the time of going to press the following significant planning applications were still be considered by HBC:

- APP/25/00697. Change of use of 24 Palmers Road from motor vehicle repair to double glazing showroom.
- APP/24/01010. Construction of industrial estate at Interbridges East (Land to the east of the railway station).
- AP-0369 Appeal against the refusal to build 5 houses at 4 Long Copse Lane.

Railway Inn gets signal to go ahead

HBC have given permission, subject to certain conditions, for the conversion of the former public house at 95 North St into 6 flats. APP/25/00704. The pub closed in 2020.

Next Steps in the Emsworth Governance Review

Words by Andrew Caple, ERF Committee

Havant Borough Council's first round of consultation on future governance arrangements for Emsworth closed on 23 March. Residents and other interested parties were invited to give their views through a survey, asking whether Emsworth should have a parish council, adopt another form of local governance, or keep things as they are. Two public exhibitions, run by council staff, were also held at Emsworth Baptist Church, on 10 February and 10 March.

The Council is now analysing the survey responses and will present options to borough councillors on how to go forward. If the findings show little support for change, the review may be brought to an end at this point. If there is enough support for new arrangements, the council will draw up detailed proposals. In the case of a parish council, this would include the number of councillors, number of wards and the services and assets it would manage.

These proposals would then go out to a second public consultation in the summer, with a final decision by borough councillors expected in the autumn. Should the creation of a new parish council be approved, elections for Emsworth parish councillors would take place in May 2027. Emsworth Residents Forum has proposed that, if a parish council is created, it is designated a Town Council.

Further information and updates are available on the Havant Borough Council website, where residents can also sign up for email alerts. Hayling Island is following the same process and timetable for its own governance review.

Strong Support from Emsworth Residents for a Parish Council

Words by Dwynwen Stepien, Chair, ERF

More than 5,000 leaflets were delivered to homes across Emsworth as part of ongoing engagement around the Community Governance Review. Volunteers reported a warm response on the doorstep, with many residents expressing enthusiasm for giving Emsworth a stronger voice in local decision-making. A parish council, they felt, could help improve local services and ensure the town's needs are better represented.

While a small number of residents raised concerns about the potential for an additional tax at a time of financial pressure, many families in particular said they believed a local council could help expand opportunities, improve facilities and give children the best start in life. The Emsworth Farmers' Market also proved a lively hub of discussion. Visitors and residents were keen to share their views, with many completing the survey on the spot — and several were surprised to learn that Emsworth does not already have a parish council.

The Havant Borough Council Community Governance Review held information forums at the Baptist Church. They were well attended and participants appreciated the input of the team in providing independent information on what a parish council is. Thanks go to Nick and the team for running these informative events.

Emsworth Residents Forum remains confident that the town has the energy and community spirit needed to build a strong parish council. They believe such a body could bring together voluntary groups, support residents who need extra help, improve local facilities, and unlock new grant funding. While a parish or town council cannot solve every challenge, the Forum argues it could make a difference by giving residents a stronger voice, targeting funds where they are most needed and helping to keep Emsworth special.

The Forum hopes residents' views will be fully reflected as the Community Governance Review moves into its second consultation phase which will consider the number of councillors, potential asset transfers and the town's capacity to run an effective parish council. It is hoped that the positive response on Hayling Island will also translate into a second phase of consultation. We look forward to working with Governance Review team as we move closer to the potential of becoming a parish council alongside Hayling Island.

Big news for Tonbridge!

Words by Dwynwen Stepien, Chair, ERF

A new Tonbridge Town Council has been approved and will launch in May 2027.

Like Emsworth and Hayling, residents in Tonbridge, Kent requested a Community Governance Review. The first consultation took place June–July 2025. This initial consultation drew a strong response, with 3,257 residents taking part—around 12% of the eligible population.

Support for creating a town council was high:

- 72% backed the proposal
- 23% were opposed
- 5% were unsure

Those in favour highlighted benefits such as:

- Giving residents a stronger voice in local decisions (47%)
- Improving local facilities and support (31%)
- Enhancing the status of Tonbridge (19%)

Concerns raised by those opposed included:

- Potential increases to council tax (41%)
- Possible duplication of services already provided by the Borough Council (27%)
- Increased local bureaucracy (27%)

There was a second phase consultation to which just under 900 residents responded. It looked at details such as the number of councillors, wards and whether to have a mayor. The Community Governance Review Working Group produced a report to full Council in February recommending the setting up of a new council. This recommendation was agreed and the new town council is scheduled to go live in May 2027.

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Council News

Chichester invests £8 million in leisure facilities as part of new leisure contract

R Shumski

At Bourne Leisure Centre investment will focus on new gym equipment

Chichester District Council has announced a major £8 million investment in its three leisure centres as part of a new 15 year leisure contract, which will begin on 1 May 2026. The council has awarded the contract to More Leisure Community Trust, an independent, not-for-profit organisation, who will operate and manage the leisure centres in Chichester, Southbourne and Midhurst. More Leisure has committed to investing the £8 million in a comprehensive programme of improvements across all three leisure centres.

Significant investment is being made across Westgate Leisure Centre in Chichester to transform the customer experience and expand the range of activities on offer. The centre will undergo a major reconfiguration to create a suite of new specialist studios. At Bourne Leisure Centre in Southbourne, investment will focus on enhancing the fitness experience with new gym equipment alongside a full refurbishment of the changing rooms to improve comfort and accessibility for all visitors.

Staff currently employed at the centres will transfer to the new provider under their existing terms and conditions, and More Leisure has also indicated its intention to increase staffing levels. All leisure memberships for the centres will also automatically transfer across to the new provider.

Food waste collections to start soon

F Mishevski

Food waste will be processed to generate energy and valuable compost and fertiliser

Working in partnership with neighbouring authority Portsmouth City Council, Havant Borough Council is set to launch its new weekly food waste collection service in selected areas of the borough. The pilot scheme will be introduced on 20 April with ten thousand households taking part. Residents in the selected areas will have been notified by letter in March before receiving their indoor and outdoor caddies for their food waste.

The weekly collections of food waste have come as part of the national legislation from Central Government, along with the Havant Borough Council's drive to help residents recycle more and waste less. Separating food waste from other rubbish means household waste bins are cleaner, do not smell as much and results in less being sent to the local incinerator. Food waste will be taken to a special processing plant, where it will be used to generate energy and valuable soil enhancers, including nutrient-rich compost and liquid fertiliser.

The results of the pilot scheme will be monitored, with a longer-term view of rolling out a food waste recycling service borough-wide by the end of the year.

Havant Borough Council agrees a balanced budget

Against on-going demands and costs driven by external forces, the budget for Havant Borough Council for 2026/27 has been formally agreed at Full Council. Furthermore, the new budget not only balances the books without drawing on reserves, it also delivers on a range of capital projects which will have a profoundly positive effect on the borough.

The net revenue budget for Havant Borough Council in 2026/27 is £21.6 million, which represents a 10.4% increase over the previous year. In addition to this extra investment which will support critical council services such as housing, temporary accommodation and the continuation of the play park refurbishment programme, councillors at Full Council also approved an ambitious five-year capital programme. The capital programme commits to £180 million of investment over five years (£222 million in total with continuing investment into existing projects) to support a wide range of social, commercial and environmental ventures in the area. The new projects include:

- Flood and coastal erosion risk management at Eastoke, Selsmore, and Mengham (through securing government funding support)
- Retrofitting programme for key housing sites
- New sports facilities at the Front Lawn Community Hub
- Public realm enhancements for Waterlooville town centre
- Vacant shop scheme for Havant town centre
- Biodiversity improvements at The Bog in Purbrook
- Restoration of the Oyster Beds on Hayling Island
- Improvements to active travel routes, including the Waterlooville-Denmead corridor and the Hermitage Stream

Cash Access UK is bringing a banking hub to Havant Town Centre

A Mkumbwa

Havant Borough Council is delighted to learn that Havant Town Centre has been recommended for a banking hub, which will be delivered by Cash Access UK – a not-for-profit company funded by the major high street banks. The new shared banking hub will bring cash and everyday banking services to the town centre, such as cash withdrawals, depositing cash and cheques, and paying utility bills, as well as a community banker service, allowing customers to speak with their own bank about more complicated matters on specific days.

The community facility will allow residents and local businesses to access banking services in-person, regardless of who they bank with. These hubs are designed to offer easy access to cash and face-to-face banking support, especially in areas where traditional local branches have closed. A date for the opening of the Banking Hub is yet to be confirmed.

(Editor: Nationwide is the only bank to have a branch in Havant town centre. HSBC, Lloyds, Halifax and Santander still have branches is Waterlooville)

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Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority set to deliver changes across the region

The Hampshire and the Solent region has secured a major investment fund of £1.3 billion. This funding will support the new Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority (HSCCA), which will focus on boosting economic growth, encouraging innovation among local businesses, and creating more opportunities for communities when the Authority is created later this year.

From early summer 2026 the HSCCA will have new devolved powers. This means it will be able to direct investment and deliver improvements across the region. Its main areas of responsibility will include:

- Transport
- Skills and Employment Support
- Housing and Strategic Planning
- Economic Regeneration and Development: the ability to attract and retain national and international investment
- Environment and Climate Change: implement initiatives for the region to reduce carbon emissions, promote sustainability, and protect natural habitats.
- Health and Wellbeing: work closely with local partners to reduce health inequalities and support healthier communities.
- Public Safety: working with Police and Fire and Rescue Authority on emergency planning, community resilience, and crime prevention.

With these devolved powers, the HSCCA will be able to lead locally driven projects, create new opportunities for economic development, and enhance infrastructure. Leaders from Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton councils will work together, alongside other board members, on priorities that reflect the needs of local communities. An Interim Chief Executive, Dr Ruth Adams, has been appointed, with temporary staff to fill key roles including Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer to ensure legal operations. The recruitment of permanent staff has started.

Dr Ruth Adams, Hampshire and Isle of Wight county authority leader

This legislation will transfer significant powers from central government to the HSCCA, giving it controls over major local matters including transport, housing, regeneration, public safety, adult skills training, health and wellbeing and the environment. Local councils will still be responsible for day-to-day service decisions in their communities. The first Mayor will be elected for a four-year term in May 2028. www.hantsandsolent-ca.gov.uk.

The make-up of the major council restructure across Hampshire has been revealed

Four new councils covering larger areas will be created on the mainland, with the Isle of Wight remaining a standalone local authority.

• Southampton, Eastleigh, the Waterside area of the New Forest and southern parts of Test Valley will form one council.

• Portsmouth will be paired up with Fareham, Havant, Gosport, southern parts of East Hampshire and one parish of Winchester.

• The rest of the New Forest will become part of a council with the remaining Test Valley, East Hampshire and Winchester areas.

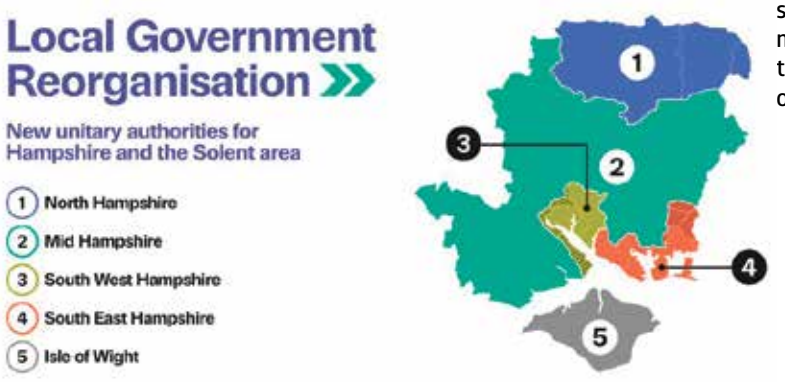
• The north of the county will see Basingstoke and Deane combined with Hart and Rushmoor.

Four different merger options were put forward by the region's existing local authorities. The option favoured by ministers was the preference of local authorities in Eastleigh, Fareham, Hart, Havant, Portsmouth and Southampton. The only subject with unanimous backing was for the Isle of Wight staying a separate council.

Hampshire County Council and East Hampshire District Council focused on building their own case for a three-authority model.

The new unitary authorities are set to take over services from April 2028.

Elections for shadow authorities, which will prepare for the implementation date, will be held in May next year. The mergers, known as local government reorganisation, are being brought forward as part of the Labour government's move to end the two-tier structure. At present, Hampshire has a mix of areas with district or borough councils delivering some services alongside the county council providing others, and unitary authorities delivering all services in Portsmouth, Southampton and on the Isle of Wight.


Local Government Reorganisation
New unitary authorities for Hampshire and the Solent area
1 North Hampshire
2 Mid Hampshire
3 South West Hampshire
4 South East Hampshire
5 Isle of Wight

Elections will be held in May next year

West Sussex Councils issue update on reorganisation decision

West Sussex local authorities had been expecting a decision from the Government on local government reorganisation by the end of March. On 25 March 2026 the Government issued an update confirming that no decision has yet been made on which unitary solution should be taken forward in Sussex. Instead, they have announced that they will be running a second consultation on proposals covering the whole of Sussex.

The new consultation will see two variations on the proposals already submitted by Sussex local authorities. The first proposed modification is moving Chichester District Council into a unitary with Crawley Borough Council, Horsham District Council and Mid Sussex District Council. Leaving a second unitary in West Sussex comprising Arun District Council, Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council. The second modification would see boundary changes moving wards in Falmer, Peacehaven and Saltdean from Lewes District Council in East Sussex to Brighton & Hove City Council.

The consultation will begin after the local elections in May, and a decision is expected in the summer after the consultation period closes and new representations are considered. The overall timescale for reorganisation remains the same, with elections to the new shadow unitary authorities expected in May 2027 preparing for the new authorities to formally launch in April 2028.

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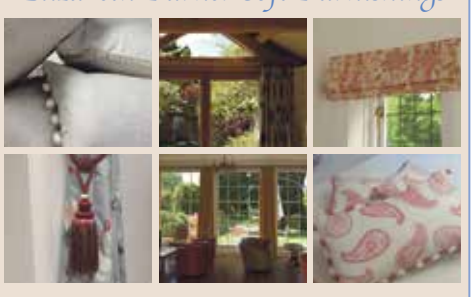

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Emsworth Arts Trail

Step into a World of Imagination: Emsworth Arts Trail 2026 Awaits

Words by Samantha Millington-Ringwood

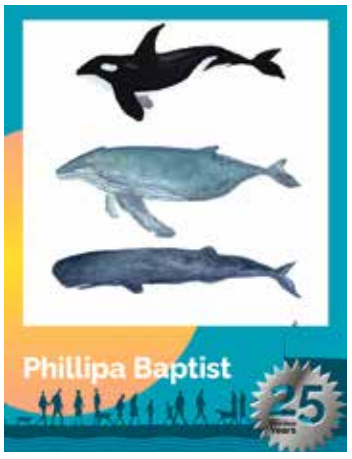
Emsworth Arts Trail returns this spring for a landmark year as it celebrates its 25th anniversary, an extraordinary milestone for one of the South Coast's most beloved and enduring community-driven arts events. What began in 2001 as a small collective of local artists opening their studio doors to neighbours has now become a vibrant, nationally recognised showcase of creativity, attracting thousands of visitors annually.

The 2026 trail promises to be one of the most diverse and ambitious yet, featuring nearly 100 artists exhibiting in private studios, popup spaces, gardens, community hubs, and independent businesses across the town. Spanning two weekends, the trail will immerse visitors in painting, sculpture, ceramics, printmaking, textiles, woodwork, jewellery, glass, and mixed media, offering an incredible variety for art lovers, collectors, and curious newcomers alike.

This year the trail welcomes 19 new artists, each bringing fresh perspectives and innovative work to the creative landscape of Emsworth. Their arrival highlights the continued growth of the town's artistic community and its reputation as a cultural destination. Artwork will be available at a wide range of price points, making the trail accessible whether you're looking to invest in a standout piece or simply enjoy browsing the many displays.

In addition to the individual open studios - always a favourite aspect of the trail - group exhibitions will be hosted in community centres, galleries, private homes, gardens, shops, pubs, and cafés. These venues help transform Emsworth into an open-air gallery, with creativity visible on every corner. Visitors are encouraged to explore at their own pace, discovering not only art but also the charm of Emsworth's picturesque waterfront, independent shops, and thriving food scene.

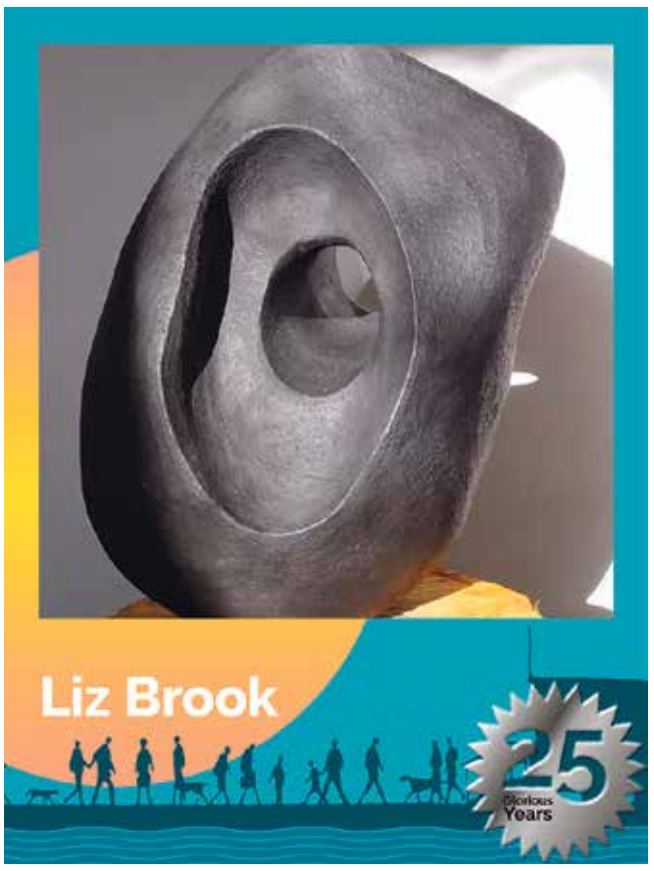
Trail guides complete with maps, venue information, artist listings and tips for planning your route will be available in local shops from early April. The guide is an essential companion for exploring the trail and discovering the breadth of talent on display.

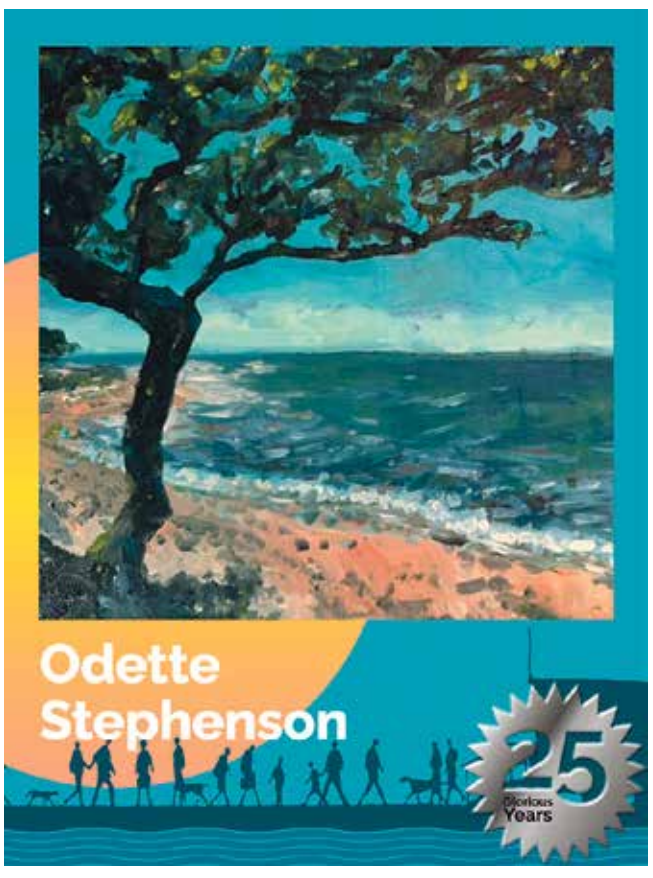


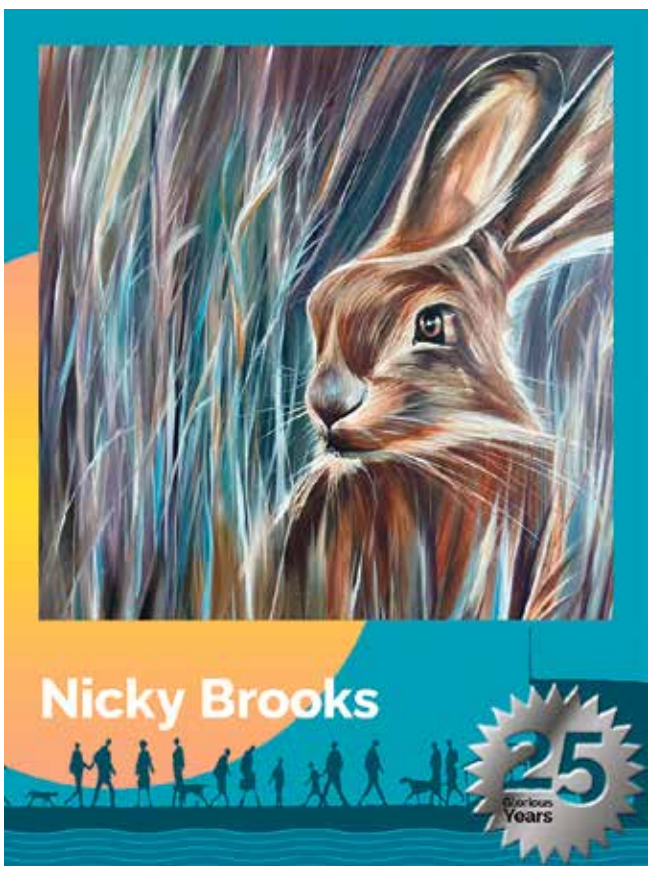
The 2026 Emsworth Arts Trail takes place over two weekends

- 25–26 April 2026
- 2–3–4 May 2026

Visitors can find full details, artist profiles, and downloadable maps on the trail's website: https://emsworthartstrail.org.uk







Emsworth Art Group participate in Emsworth Arts Trail

Words by Martin Gebbett, Publicity Officer, Emsworth Art Group

Emsworth Art Group are continuing to meet in the Baptist Church until the work on the fire damaged Community Centre is finished and they can move back. Work has now re-started so the end is in sight. The Baptist Church have been most helpful and accommodating and it is a very conducive atmosphere for working.

The group comprises about 40 keen artists who work in a variety of media and subjects. They work by themselves, but share ideas and techniques, especially during the tea break. There is a lot of experimentation encouraged by watching other members work. Members' experience and ability varies from beginners to semi-professional, with every level in between. There are a number of small workshops throughout the year led by members and occasionally led by invited professionals. These are all very popular.

The next big event for the group will be participation in Emsworth Arts Trail. The group exhibits in the second weekend, 2 - 4 May, in Emsworth Community Centre. It is always popular with visitors and many paintings and cards are sold.

The group meets every Wednesday morning from 9.15 to 11.15 at the Baptist Church by the town centre roundabout. It is very popular and has a short waiting list for new members. If you would like to see them at work, come along any Wednesday to see what they do and chat about joining. If you wish to be put on the waiting list contact the secretary, Trevor Smith: atrevorsmith@gmail.com.

Emsworth Arts Trail

Emsworth Arts Trail

2026

Two glorious weekends

April 25, 26 and
May 2, 3, 4

Pick up your free trail guide in shops around the town!

Detailed information, opening times and postcodes for each of our 100 exhibitors.

If you are looking for a particular artist, please check their opening days and times on the website or guide as not every exhibitor is open for the whole of the event.

Follow us on our social media where you will find the latest news and information

You can go directly to the website by scanning the QR code

Find out more!

Check out our social media

/emsworthartstrail26

/emsworthartstrail

emsworthartstrail.org.uk

Election Special

Vote! Vote! Vote! On Thursday 7 May

Havant Borough Council

Elections will be held on Thursday 7 May for 1 seat in each of the 12 wards at Havant BC. HBC has been run, since May 2024, by a Labour/Green/Lib-Dem coalition.

The current composition of Havant BC is:
- Labour 9
- Conservative 8
- Green 6
- Liberal Democrat 5
- Reform UK 5
- Independent 3

Candidates for Emsworth ward, HBC
For a complete list see HBC website.
www.havant.gov.uk

Liberal Democrats will not be putting up a candidate.
Labour Party - no response received

Hampshire County Council

Elections will also be held on Thursday 7 May for all 78 seats at Hampshire CC, which is currently Conservative controlled. This will be the last full election for HCC which will be abolished in 2028.

The current composition of HCC is:
- Conservative 49
- Liberal Democrats 19
- Labour 3
- Green 1
- Reform 1
- Independents 5

Candidates for Emsworth & St Faiths division.
For a complete list please see HCC website.
www.hampshire.gov.uk

Labour Party - no response received

Green Party – Charles Robert

I am honoured to stand as your Green Party candidate for the ward of Emsworth in the local elections on 7 May. I have served as your local ward councillor since May 2024. It has been my pleasure to act on your behalf. I have given freely of my time with a determination to reach a solution however long it takes. I understand local needs and I am determined to support you through 'thick and thin'. I am hardworking, honest and fully prepared to stand up for you in matters that arise. If elected, I will focus on:
- Protection of our rivers from excess water extraction and pollution
- Holding Southern Water to account for the inappropriate release of raw sewage into our harbour
- Resisting the overdevelopment of the area particularly of inappropriate greenfield sites
- Supporting local businesses
- Promoting the benefits of local governance in the form of a town council

Conservative Party - Andrew Proctor

Andrew Proctor is standing as the Conservative candidate to represent Emsworth at both Borough and County level. His family has lived here for over 20 years, and he is proud to also now call Emsworth home. He cares deeply about protecting the character of this special place and the community that makes it what it is.
Before moving here, he served for many years as a councillor in Norfolk, including leading both the county council and a district council so he understands how local government works. His priorities include:
- Delivering value for your council tax
- Standing up for residents on planning decisions
- Ensuring infrastructure comes before development
- Keeping our streets safe
- Supporting local businesses and jobs

With major changes ahead for local councils, he will be a strong, experienced voice to stand up for residents while protecting what makes Emsworth such a special place to live and work.

Reform UK - Allan Darby

A proud resident of the Havant area for 14 years, with strong ties to Emsworth and a clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the town. Over that time, lasting connections have been built with local people and a genuine commitment developed to protect what makes Emsworth special while helping it thrive. A strong believer that local government must listen and act with common sense—whether addressing parking pressures, supporting independent businesses, protecting the harbour and environment, or ensuring sensible development that reflects the character of Emsworth. Concerns around localised crime and anti-social behaviour must also be taken seriously, with a focus on prevention and visibility to keep Emsworth safe. Committed to being visible, approachable and working with residents to deliver practical solutions—helping ensure Emsworth remains a vibrant, safe and well-supported community.

Green Party – Grainne Rason

I am honoured to stand as your Green Party candidate for the Hampshire County division in the local elections on May 7th. Since 2023, I have served as your ward councillor. I have loved every minute of this role but share your frustration: so many essential services, from roads to transport are the responsibility of Hampshire County Council rather than Havant. I understand local needs and have the determination to get more for residents from Hampshire County Council.
I am hard-working, honest, and ready to be the strong voice Emsworth deserves. If elected, I will focus on:
- Environmental Integrity: Holding Southern Water accountable to stop sewage discharge in our harbours and the River Ems.
- Transport & Accessibility: Securing a better bus service for North Emsworth and reinstating free travel for disabled residents before 9:30 am.
- Safety & Education: Implementing measures to reduce speeding and ensuring significantly better services for local children with special educational needs.

Liberal Democrats – Michael Lind

He has lived in Havant all his life and so knows the area well. He works hard year-round to make Havant an enjoyable, eco-friendly, community focused place to live. He is a ward councillor for Bedhampton and hopes to use his experience of Local Government to be a strong voice for Emsworth and St Faiths on Hampshire County Council. His priorities are:
- Turning the default County Council answer of 'No' to 'Yes so that phone-booking for services is restored, disabled-bus passes are reinstated, and children have safe routes to school
- Ensuring Local Government supports the NHS by delivering effective preventative health measures that benefit us all and reduce demand on Adult Social Care and the NHS
- Fixing the potholes

Conservative - Andrew Proctor

Andrew Proctor is standing as the Conservative candidate to represent Emsworth at both Borough and County level. See his election address for HBC elections (left)

Reform - Jeremy (Jerry) White

I am a retired solicitor specialising in Criminal Law, with a career built on precision, analytical thinking and attention to detail. These skills enable me to scrutinise complex issues, ensure accountability and challenge inefficiency—helping to ensure taxpayers' money is spent wisely. Living in Emsworth, I am actively involved in the community and understand the importance of protecting what makes our town special. From local volunteering to enjoying Chichester Harbour and surrounding green spaces, I see first-hand the need to nurture our environment alongside supporting local services. I am standing as a Reform UK candidate because I believe Emsworth deserves practical, common-sense decision-making that protects both our community and our natural surroundings. If elected, I will work to deliver accountability, better value for money, and decisions that reflect the needs of residents while safeguarding the environment for future generations.

West Sussex County Council

Elections will be held on 7 May for all 70 seats at West Sussex CC which is currently Conservative controlled.

The current composition of WSCC is:
- Conservative 40
- Liberal Democrats 10
- Labour 8
- Reform UK 4
- Green 1
- Independents 6
- Vacancy 1

Past results for Bourne division, West Sussex County Council
(Westbourne, Southbourne, Thorney area),
The 2025 County Council elections were postponed until this year due to local government reorganisation.

Other elections

Chichester District Council
Full elections for all 36 seats are scheduled to be held in May 2027.

Other areas
Local elections will also be held on 7 May 2026 in Portsmouth, Gosport and Fareham

Mayoral authorities
Elections for the new mayoral authorities in Hampshire and Sussex are scheduled for 2028.

New Unitary Councils
Elections scheduled for 2028.

Party	2013	2017	2019 Nov by-election	2021 May	2021 Nov by-election
Conservative	1158	1357	1368	1859	893
Labour	295	264	161	336	25
Lib Dems	360	659	1009	1064	1180
Green	Did not contest	234	250	400	178
Other parties	1241 (UKIP)	895 (UKIP)	Did not contest	Did not contest	Did not contest

The Conservatives won in 2017 but their candidate defected to the Brexit Party and resigned in 2019. The Conservative candidate won in the 2019 by-election and held the seat in May 2021 but then resigned from WSCC. Andrew Kerry-Beddell won the seat for the Lib-Dems in the Nov 2021 by-election but since February 2025 has sat as a member of the Green Party. He is not standing in the May elections.

Candidates for Bourne division, West Sussex CC

The Ems contacted all the main political parties and invited them to submit details of their candidate. Please note that the closing date for nominations is after the date that The Ems goes to press. This means that there may be other candidates listed on the ballot paper. For a complete list please see WSCC website. www.westsussex.gov.uk

Liberal Democrats - Tracie Bangert

On 7 May I will be standing for election to West Sussex County Council in the Bourne Division for the Liberal Democrats. I am one of the two District Councillors for Southbourne, which I have represented since 2019, and am Cabinet Member for Communities in the LibDem administration in Chichester. I am also the Civilian Military Champion for the District, a post I have held for seven years, which is particularly significant as Thorney Island is the only Army Base in West Sussex. I have lived with my husband, and our five now grown-up children in Southbourne for the past thirty years.

I am a Civilian Military Champion for the District

Green Party - Antoine Delepine

He is a cabinet maker (and amateur gardener). He cares about the environment and the impact of climate change on the local community. One of his main concerns is the number of new houses built without adequate access to local infrastructure, forcing residents to drive everywhere to get to school, shops or GP surgeries and contributing to congestion on the road. He is also concerned about sewage discharge in our waterways, and the levels of water abstraction from local rivers such as the Ems leading to wildlife loss.

Antoine is concerned about the impact of climate change locally

Conservative No response received / Labour No response received / Reform No response received

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2 Palmer's Road, Emsworth, PO10 7DL

Community

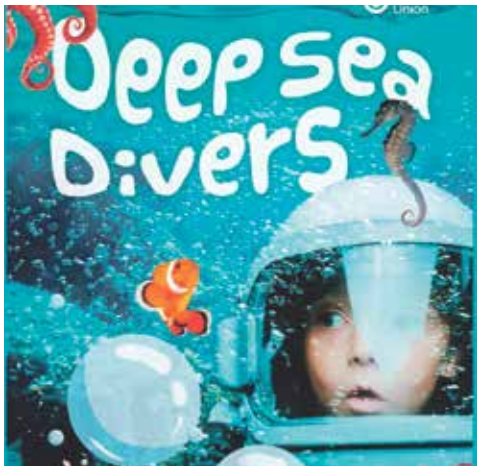
News from the Parish of Warblington with Emsworth

Deep Sea Divers Holiday Club
Dates: 25–26 August. Time: 10am–4pm
Age: Any child who has been in primary school during the 2025–26 academic year.
Cost: £6 per day.

Activities: Games, crafts, songs, drama and Bible teaching.

Join us as we explore the oceans and dive deep beneath the sea, just like a deep-sea diver. Together, we'll dive into Jesus' story – down to the depths of his death and up again to celebrate the amazing news of his resurrection. Along the way, we'll discover who Jesus is and why his story is the greatest rescue mission the world has ever known.

For more information, please contact Jacqui Watson: childrenandyouth@warblington-withemsworth.org



Growing in Faith Together
Our parish continues to offer a range of welcoming and accessible ways to gather – we'd love to invite you to join us. Here are a couple of newer ways we're meeting together as a church family:

All-in@5 is a relaxed, informal service for all ages, especially families. Meeting at 5pm in St James' Parish Hall on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, it offers a chance to worship together, learn from the Bible, and encourage one another as we explore how faith in God can help guide our lives.

Anna Café Church meets on the third Monday of each month at 12:30pm, also at St James' Parish Hall. It includes a short, simple service of hymns and prayers, followed by a light lunch and time to chat. It is particularly suited to those who are more frail, carers, and anyone who values companionship, friendship and faith.

Both of these services offer a place of kindness, hope and peace in an uncertain world. To find out more about all of our services at St James' and St Thomas à Becket, please visit: www.warblingtonwithemsworth.org. Wherever you find yourself, there's a place for you here – we'd love to see you.

Weekly Dementia Outreach Sessions launch in Emsworth this April

Dementia touches more families each year, yet many people are unsure where to turn for clear information, practical guidance and a sense of community.

As from the beginning of this month, local residents in Emsworth have a new place to find exactly that. Weekly Community Outreach sessions take place from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm at Emsworth Sports & Social Club, creating a welcoming space for people living with dementia, their carers and anyone seeking social companionship. These friendly, informal sessions are designed to bring people together for conversation, activities, refreshments and shared understanding.

The sessions form part of the Outreach service from Sage House, the dementia support charity based in Tangmere. Their aim is simple: to help people live well with dementia by providing support, advice and connection within the local community.

Each session includes 90 minutes of structured, dementia-friendly activities followed by relaxed social time. Activities may include singing, creative projects, chair-based exercise and gentle wellbeing sessions. Just as importantly, there is always time to sit with a cup of tea and talk.

Attendance is free of charge, with a suggested donation in aid of the charity.

Sage House's trained Wayfinders will also be present to offer guidance and reassurance. Whether someone has recently received a diagnosis, is caring for a loved one, or simply has questions about memory changes, the sessions provide a supportive environment in which to seek advice.

The Emsworth Outreach sessions began on 1 April and will run every Wednesday. To find out more about Sage House, including its free activities and events throughout the year, visit www.dementiasupport.org.uk/whats-on or call 01243 888691.

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www.springfieldcare.co.uk

Public Emergency Briefings

You are invited to attend a free meeting in Emsworth on how we can restore hope for climate and nature.

- Emsworth Community Centre
4.00 pm – 6.00 pm Tuesday 14 April 2026

- St James Parish Church 7.00 pm – 9.00 pm
Wednesday 22 April 2026

At both venues admission is free and complimentary refreshments will be served

On Thursday 27 November 2025 leading experts spoke on different aspects of the breakdown of climate and nature in Britain. Each had a role in the National Emergency Briefing, explaining how the altering climate and accompanying changes in nature are impacting their subjects of interest and expertise. The invited audience of 1,200 comprised MPs and other influential leaders in society. Proceedings took place in the grand venue of Westminster Methodist Central Hall.

The context was set by Chris Packham, environmentalist and broadcaster, who emphasised how small is our tiny planet in comparison to the vast universe. He highlighted how serious and urgent the situation is in the UK and the world as a whole. He denounced climate change deniers who had spread misinformation and said, "Nothing can be changed until it is faced". Climate change due to burning fossil fuels is difficult to accept but we must wake up and act. A societal tipping point is needed to address the "greatest crisis ever to affect our species". The big money oil companies continue to extract fossil fuels laid down over millions of years, most of which is simply burnt. After 30 COP* meetings the average temperature globally continues to rise, linked to the increasing concentration of carbon dioxide.

After this introduction chairman Mike Berners-Lee, author and leading thinker on the systemic risks facing humanity, addressed the audience. He is Professor in Practice at

D Erasmus

How will extremes in weather affect our food and energy supplies, the economy, security and life in general?

Lancaster University and director and principal consultant of Small World Consulting, based in the Lancaster Environment Centre.

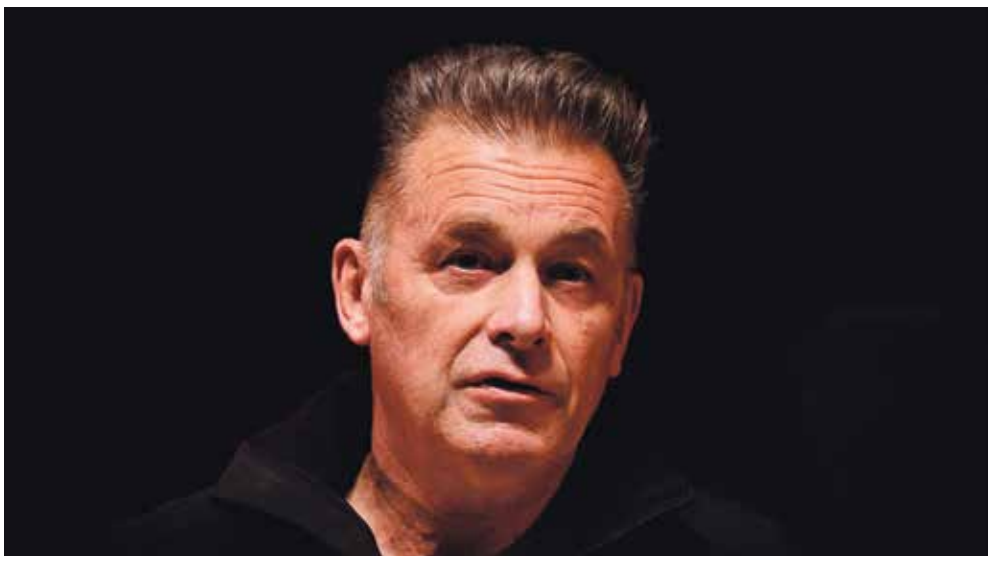
A panel of academics used their expertise to inform how humans and wildlife are being influenced by climate change. Flooding, natural fires, storms and droughts are increasing in frequency and severity. Oceans are rising due to warming as ice melts at the poles and in glaciers. There are tipping points beyond which changes will be irreversible. Ocean currents and prevailing winds are altering. How will this impact the UK? How will extremes in weather affect our food and energy supplies, the economy, security and life in general? What can we do about it?

All the talks can be found in full on YouTube, searching 'National Emergency Briefing'. An excellent 27 minute summary video has been compiled and may be found on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sa7uh192r0

There is hope. A cross-party climate and nature bill is to be introduced, ensuring governments treat the twin crisis as the emergency it is. Access this link to sign a petition and for national information: www.zerohour.uk

Public meetings are being organised throughout the country, including two venues in Emsworth. In April you can see a documentary focusing on the briefings, how life and nature in Britain will be affected as the climate changes and how we can adapt and address the problems. The idea is to inform the nation about the misinformation they have been fed and enable the populace to make up their own minds in a non-partisan way. After the film, about 45 minutes long, refreshments will be served and there will be discussions.

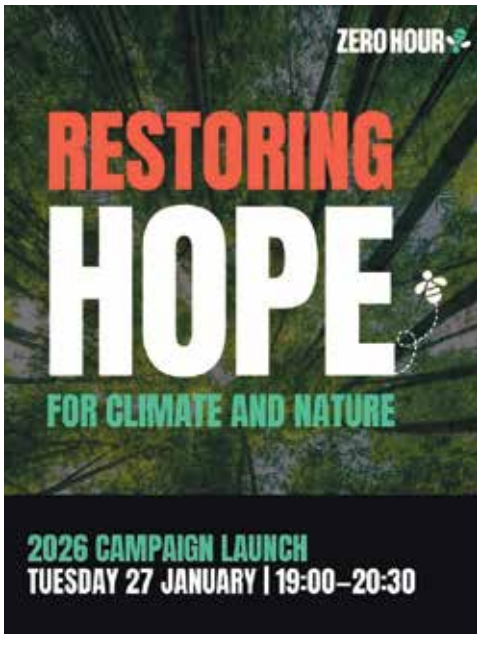
*COP. Conference of Parties, the United Nations annual climate change summit



Chris Packham highlighted how serious and urgent the situation is in the UK and the world as a whole.

Wikipedia

Mike Berners-Lee, one of the leading experts speaking on the breakdown of climate and nature in Britain



RNLI

The Emsworth and Havant Branch of the RNLI took a collection at Havant Waitrose Branch on Saturday 14 March 2026.

The team received donations amounting to £333.30. They would like to thank the many members of the public for their very generous support, and also give a big thank you to Waitrose Havant and their team for giving us this opportunity.

On Saturday 25 April 2026 the branch will be holding their Spring Coffee Morning from 9.45am to Midday at Emsworth Slipper Sailing Club. There will be stalls including RNLI souvenirs, home produce, 'nearly new' and a tombola. We look forward to welcoming you at our Spring fundraising event.

Community

News from Wemsfest

Words by Mark Ringwood, email: adwemsfest@gmail.com

WemsFest to Launch Buddying System

If you're slightly hesitant about going out on your own to music events WemsFest has a scheme which might alleviate your concerns. Next Autumn they're starting a 'Buddying Scheme' whereby anyone coming to one of their events will be met by one of the volunteer organisers and made to feel at ease. Alongside this will be a series of matinee performances in different venues with the prime aim of people being able to attend shows, and leave, during daylight hours.

Change of Format for 10th Emsworth Beer, Cider & Wine Festival

WemsFest has introduced longer hours and a simpler system for the 10th Festival which takes place in Emsworth Community Centre from Friday 25 to Sunday 27 September. In recognition of shorter working hours for many people the session on Friday 25th will start at 2pm and run through until 10.30pm. In the past the festival split Saturday into two sessions. This will now become one session starting at 11am and ending at 10.30pm. As it's a milestone anniversary the organisers are planning to showcase a selection of the most popular ales since it first started.

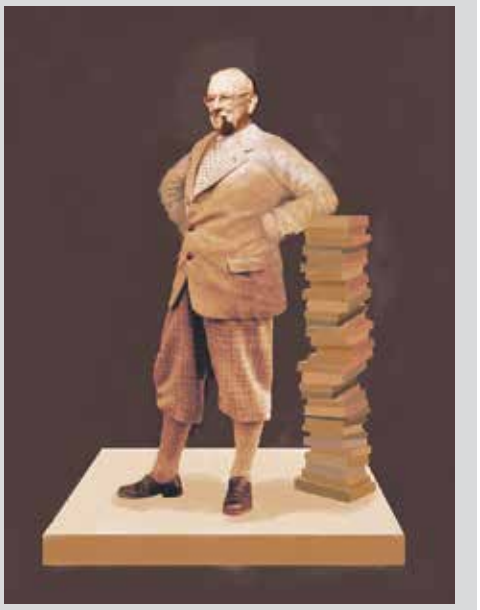
Bluegrass, Folk, African, and the Unexpected!

Forthcoming WemsFest shows include top US Bluegrass musicians Michael Daves & Jacob Jolliff at The Barn, Cobnor Point on Saturday 11 April. Former Steeleye Span fiddle player Peter Knight brings his highly acclaimed Gigspanner Big Band to St. James Church on Wednesday 15 April, and the month of May includes Scotland's Tannahill Weavers (10th), Boo Hewerdine & Yvonne Lyon (22nd), and Malian musician Bassekou Kouyate (23rd). There's a 'mini-invasion' of Scottish musicians in June headed by The John McCusker Trio (7th), Tarran (13th), and GNOSS (21st).

Gigspanner Big Band

Boost for PG Wodehouse Statue

The team behind creating a statue to commemorate PG Wodehouse having lived and worked in Emsworth are delighted that a world famous songwriter has made a donation to the campaign to raise funds. Sir Tim Rice has made an as yet undisclosed sum of money towards the project which has been estimated to attract as much as fifteen million pounds annually to the area. Cocking-based, but internationally recognised, sculptor Phillip Jackson has produced a maquette of the final work which shows the author and songsmith accompanied by a selection of his many books. Few people realise that, apart from being an accomplished author, PG Wodehouse was behind one of the most successful runs of musicals on Broadway in New York. At one time he had eight different theatres showcasing his work.



Emsworth Enters '2028 Town of Culture'

Thank you to those who have offered support to our endeavour to become a Town of Culture, and to those who were able to join our meeting at the Community Centre on Friday 6 March - we appreciate many of you could not attend but you've indicated your willingness to be involved.

At the meeting we spent some time exploring what becoming Town of Culture 2028 would mean for Emsworth. There were a lot of excellent ideas about building on existing cultural activities and there were quite a few really innovative ideas. We discussed how we can reach members of the community who are not currently engaging in the activities across the area and we also focused on the needs of young people and how our approach could enable them to design relevant activities.

To foster our heritage, creativity and community spirit is a prime objective. We have a great story to tell. After some discussion it was agreed that we should go ahead with an Expression of Interest to become a Town of Culture 2028. The meeting felt that, should we not be successful this time, we should use this opportunity for Emsworth to hold its own year of celebration in 2028, possibly named *Emsworth 800* as we would be celebrating just over 800 years of existence as a town.

I agreed, on behalf of the group, to take forward our Expression of Interest (EOI). As a Community Interest Company, WemsFest is in a position to lead this work with, of course, all your support.

Thank you also to Emsworth Residents Forum who are a key partner in this endeavour. We anticipate a response to our EOI before the end of April and have provisionally booked a meeting for 24 April - we will get back to you before this date. Again many thanks for your positive feedback and response to what we think is an exciting opportunity.

If you have any thoughts following the meeting they would be very appreciated.

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News from our Councillors

Green Party

Cllr Grainne Rason

I have been working hard as your local ward councillor and as the Cabinet Lead for Climate, Environment and Nature. I am pleased that funding for the Langstone flood defence scheme has been approved, protecting the village and the road to Hayling. Funding has also been secured for the Warblington and Conigar Flood Risk and Habitat Recreation Scheme.

There will be more cycle hoops installed to encourage cycling. CCTV cameras have been installed and have greatly reduced fly-tipping at two of our bottle banks. I am continuing to push for more EV chargers in car parks, as well as additional residents' permits. I remain heavily involved with the Water Matters group, challenging Southern Water's plans to use Havant Thicket Reservoir for recycled sewage effluent, and monitoring pollution entering our harbours from sewage discharges and storm overflows.

The most important and rewarding part of my role is helping residents. From assisting with planning applications and housing needs, to getting streetlights repaired, reporting vandalism and drug dealing to the police, and distributing free books to food banks—no two days are ever the same. Thank you to everyone who takes the time to contact me.

I am continuing to push for more EV chargers in car parks and additional residents' permits.

Cllr Reuben Mychaleckyj

I am passionate about protecting our water to keep it safe for us and future generations to enjoy. Emsworth defines itself by its relationship with water, from historic oyster beds and the mill pond to the Natural Landscape of Chichester Harbour. Yet we watch sewage spills into the sea and River Ems, while the privatised water companies must pursue profit before stopping the pollution.

Despite the fearmongering, bringing water back into public ownership would cost the taxpayer nothing. This is not a purchase. It is a cancellation of a failed contact. Our precious chalk streams and harbours are being treated as open sewers. This is why I am calling on you to join the Surfers Against Sewage Paddle Out on 16 May at 12 noon, meeting at the Inn on the Beach, Hayling Island.

Our precious chalk streams like the River Ems are being treated as open sewers.

Cllr Charles Robert

I have made many important decisions on behalf of the residents of Havant and Emsworth and have supported local businesses. As chair of the Licensing Committee, I have ensured the borough's licencing policies are up to date and have made decisions on the granting, placing conditions on or removal of licences, always to ensure public safety, and to reduce crime, disorder and nuisance. I sit on the Planning Committee and have questioned and resisted the inappropriate development of greenfield sites, using my vote to protect our open spaces and our trees.

I am against the charging at Bridge Road car park. I support the Ems Valley Memorial Arboretum (see photo) and I have acted at Hampshire Farm Meadow to prevent nitrate pollution of the River Ems, to stop strimming and damaging the trees and to keep on top of the bridge repairs. I back the project to enhance Brook Meadow and restore the River Ems to its former glory. I have supported the Hollybank Woods Great Perimeter Project working alongside the team. I listen to residents, I will stick up for them, be a link for them to authority. I strongly believe I have served the public well and hope to continue to do so.

HCC Councillor for Emsworth and St Faiths

Lulu Bowerman

After 10 years of representing Emsworth at Havant Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, I have decided not to stand for election here again.

As I am sure all readers of The Ems readers are aware, the first three months of this year were extremely wet and cold and what a relief it was when not only did the rain stop but the sun then came out.

From a Highways operation perspective the change in weather brought a welcome opportunity to begin the task of fixing the road defects and potholes across Hampshire caused by the weather conditions. I am aware of the various potholes that have been reported around Emsworth and I know the crews are out repairing these and re-surfacing the roads when possible. I escalated a report of the worsening pothole in North Street that had opened up and this was fixed quickly using a 'patch' repair when the weather improved.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to report potholes and road defects and please continue to report them by using the online reporting system – www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/potholes - or use the 'Our Hants' app which you can download on your phone. This is a really easy way to upload a photo of a pothole or problem and complete the form while you're out and about.

The Washington Road Underpass continued to flood earlier this year and cause issues for all users, particularly the children going to school. It is a complex situation which originates with the actual design and build of the underpass itself and involves various different agencies, such as National Highways and Hampshire Highways. Working with officers and engineers, the drains have been cleared and future solutions designed which hopefully will alleviate the problem with regular maintenance.

I was pleased to be able to give part of my reduced County Councillor grant to Emsworth in Bloom to help them continue their fantastic work around the Mill Pond and the town. Sheila Morris and Angela McMillan and all their helpers really do deserve our thanks and appreciation. The Emsworth Community Garden also benefited from some grant funding to help them with tools and fruit cage construction and I hope this successful local project will continue to thrive and attract more residents to become involved.

Finally – this is my last county councillor report for The Ems. After 10 years of representing Emsworth at Havant Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, I have decided not to stand for election here again. I have lived in Emsworth for 30 years (and the local area for a lot longer) and plan to continue to enjoy all the wonderful aspects that make our part of the South Coast special and hopefully see more of my family and friends!

I have always served the local community. Starting as a school governor at Emsworth Primary School, involvement with the Emsworth Food Festival and British Food Fortnight, Christmas lights, Emsworth Alliance during Covid, to name but a few projects, and I have worked with some amazing people who really care about preserving the town while helping it to adapt and thrive in the 21st century. Thank you to them and also for your support in the past.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to report potholes and road defects and please continue to report them by using the online reporting system

Environment

Emsworth Allotment Holder Calls for Community-Led Future

Words by Sharon Collins

Sharon Collings, a long-standing Emsworth allotment holder, is urging fellow growers to consider a new, community-led approach to managing local sites, amid growing concerns about their future.

Allotments have been part of British life since Saxon times, playing a crucial role during both World Wars and continuing today as spaces for food production, wellbeing and community. For many, they are places of sanctuary—offering exercise, social connection and the opportunity to live more sustainably.

But concerns are mounting about how local allotments are managed. Emsworth is home to three council-owned sites and while responsibility has recently returned to Havant Borough Council, there has historically been a lack of investment, with issues such as leaking water troughs left unresolved.

With a Community Governance Review currently underway, there is the possibility that these allotments could be transferred to a newly formed parish council. However, this has raised concerns about potential plot fee increases. A parish precept—reported to be around £92—may not stretch far, leading to fears that allotments could be seen as an additional, uncapped source of income.

Instead, a different solution is being proposed: self-management.

Having visited allotment sites in Fareham, where plot holders run their own sites through committees, the Emsworth grower describes the difference as "night and day." Low fees, better facilities and direct reinvestment into the sites have created thriving, sustainable spaces. The proposal for Emsworth could see a shared committee formed by plot holders across all three sites, enabling growers to have direct control and responsibility. Supporters believe this would protect affordability, improve facilities and strengthen the sense of community.

A meeting is taking place at the Plaza, Havant on 28 May, where plot holders will be invited to explore the idea further. HBC is understood to be open to listening. For those who value allotments as growing spaces and as vital community assets, the message is clear: the future may well lie in their own hands. For details see notices on site.

Ems Valley Memorial Arboretum EVMA

Letter from the Chair, Eva Mikuska

After a long and particularly rainy winter, spring has finally arrived, bringing renewed optimism for the trees at the Ems Valley Memorial Arboretum. During the winter, following the last tree-planting event in November, ten new trees were planted to replace those that had not survived the challenging weather conditions. The prolonged wet weather proved difficult for some of the younger plantings, highlighting the importance of ongoing care and monitoring. While a number of the newly planted trees are known to be slow growers, there is hope that the warmer temperatures and improved conditions of spring will give them the boost they need to establish and thrive.

On 28 February, the Friends of Hampshire Farm Meadows held another productive work party at Ems Valley Memorial Arboretum. Despite challenging ground conditions, many volunteers turned out, demonstrating their ongoing commitment to maintaining and improving this valued community space. This time, efforts were focused on the quercetum, the section of the Arboretum dedicated to oak trees. Volunteers carefully removed the protective tree guards to allow access for clearing perennial weeds and grass that compete with young trees for nutrients and water.

The guards were later replaced, as the young oaks are not large enough to thrive without protection from wildlife and environmental damage. This careful attention helps ensure strong, healthy growth and increases the long-term success of the planting scheme. Encouragingly, some of the conifers on the site have started to mature sufficiently for their guards to be removed. These trees are looking particularly healthy and well established, providing visible evidence of the progress being made through regular volunteer care. Work parties such as this play an important role in supporting biodiversity, improving the landscape, and preserving the Arboretum as a peaceful place for reflection and enjoyment.

The Emsworth Tree Wardens, with whom we worked very closely, have now been disbanded. As a final collaborative effort, one of our trustees, Guy Schofield, worked alongside former Tree Warden, Ann Joly, to plant seven trees in the recreation ground to replace trees that had died. Some of the new trees were funded by Hampshire County Council; others by the Tree Wardens. This final joint initiative provided a fitting conclusion to a long and productive partnership.

The achievements so far have provided us with a strong platform on which to build. Your support enables us to continue caring for this special place, even when nature tests us. If anyone needs to contact us about anything in this letter, please email info@evma.org.uk or scan our QR code for up-to-date information and news. There is also an interactive map where one can identify all the trees so far planted: https://evma.org.uk/the-trees/tree-locator. Anyone interested in work parties should register with Friends of Hampshire Farm Meadows (Neil Mant hfmfriends@gmail.com).

Emsworth Community Garden

Words and photos by Steve Banham

After a very wet winter, spring is finally in the air and the volunteers at the Community Garden have been able to complete the planned accessibility improvements using the grant money awarded by the Havant Lottery Community Fund in November 2025. We hope this will encourage those with disabilities to make use of the garden. The new planting season has also begun, the potatoes are being chitted and a wide variety of vegetables are being planted out both in the garden and in trays in the polytunnel ready for planting out later in the spring. We have also set aside an area for vegan vegetables. One of our latest volunteers is an expert beekeeper from New Zealand and we hope to introduce a beehive in the garden this year.

In February we successfully applied for a grant from our Hampshire County Councillor, Lulu Bowerman. This money will be used to build a cage for fruit canes as well as an automatic water irrigation system for the polytunnel. Emsworth Community Garden is a good social space to get some fresh air and exercise as well as a place to grow your own fruit and vegetables in the current challenging economic environment.

If you would like to join us, please contact Kathy Parker on WhatsApp (07415 378564). We will give you the details and you can pop along on Wednesday afternoon after 2pm or Saturday morning after 10am to meet the team.

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River Ems

Words and photos by Reuben Mychaleckyj and Sarah Hughes

The River Ems is one of the UK's rare and precious chalk rivers. With only around 280 chalk streams in the world - 85% of them in the UK - these ecosystems are internationally rare and important. Unlike most rivers, chalk streams are fed by underground aquifers that filter water through chalk, producing exceptionally clear, mineral-rich water, stable year-round temperatures and habitat for specialist species like water crowfoot and brown trout.

The Western Sussex Rivers Trust is working in partnership with landowners within the River Ems catchment to restore river health, increase biodiversity and help the river become resilient to flooding and drought. We are working with landowners on river restoration projects including creation of new wetlands, reedbeds and pools to enhance water retention and reconnect the river to the floodplains by increasing a healthy habitat for more diverse wildlife (European otters, European eels etc) and improve fish migration. These changes will also enable the area to become wetter for longer and function as a valuable habitat corridor.

Last year's drought revealed how fragile our River Ems has become and there were several locations where the river disappeared entirely. Portsmouth Water abstracts water from the aquifer that feeds the River Ems to supply homes and businesses. The twin pressures of drought and abstraction last year left the river barely flowing and unable to sustain a healthy ecosystem. Climate change and housebuilding - with potentially over 1,000 new homes expected across the area - will increase the pressure further as all these developments will need water. Without intervention, the Ems risks becoming a 'ghost river' every summer.

Ultimately Portsmouth Water's abstraction licence must be reviewed by the Environment Agency, reducing the allowable abstraction amount to protect what remains of this vital ecosystem. However, the river cannot wait for this review - it is our collective responsibility to act now. The water we use every day has a huge impact on our rivers. We all need to be clever with our water use, not only to support our rivers and the wildlife who rely on them, but to safeguard our own water supply.

Every litre saved supports our river. Help by:

- Turning off the tap when brushing teeth
- Swap baths for short showers
- Collect rainwater for plants
- Reuse cooking water on the garden
- Water gardens in early morning or late evening to reduce evaporation
- Collect water whilst waiting for the tap to run hot, and reuse
- Install water-saving shower heads
- Update appliances to water-efficient models
- Install grey water harvesting/recycling systems if you can afford it

The Environment Agency must step in to enforce sustainable abstraction levels. Without water, the River Ems cannot recover. Contact your local MP, County, District and Parish Councillors asking them to raise this issue. Everything we do as individuals within the river catchment, including agriculture, septic systems, roads, gardens, livestock, even dog flea treatments, has an impact on the chalk aquifer and our river. Do your bit now and help protect our precious River Ems.

Dry and wet river beds at River Street. Without intervention, the Ems risks becoming a 'ghost river' every summer.

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Environment

Time for Twenty?

Words by Anthony Dymock

Until 1970 the old A27 ran round the Cross in the middle of Chichester on up Queen Street right through Emsworth and Havant town centres. Serious congestion in the mid-70s brought the inner bypass which eased congestion until the 90s when traffic had doubled. A new A27 bypass became increasingly urgent with a debate whether there should be a junction for Emsworth. When it opened in 1988 the effect was dramatic, but traffic doubled again between 1990 and 2010 and, apart from the pandemic hiccup, has continued to increase since.

The daily average traffic count on the A27 is now over 50,000 with another 11,000 on the A259. The A27 is in the top 50 trunk roads for crashes and every time there is a crash leading to its closure traffic jams the A259 and Emsworth becomes another rat run. But weight of traffic is not the only problem. Vehicles have become bigger, heavier and more powerful with faster acceleration, higher speeds bringing more road wear and potholes. Roadside parking is scarcer and more cramped - apparent any day on Emsworth High Street. Temporary obstructions, such as deliveries or frail passengers disembarking, reduce High Street traffic to a single track.

Emsworth is blessed with many independent shops but to use them you have to criss-cross the High Street. There is no Zebra crossing, only those ambiguous pale brick crossings – whose right of way do they indicate, pedestrian or road traffic? Sight lines are poor, especially when double decker buses rest in the Square. Crossing the High Street often entails emerging gingerly from behind parked cars and vans with pedestrians trusting their luck to drivers being safety conscious and courteous. Inevitably there are accidents and many near misses. Because Emsworth is popular with visitors at weekends there isn't much difference between weekday and weekend pedestrian activity, often including children, buggies and dogs. In fine weather it's particularly busy.

Do we need to wait until there is more blood on the streets before deciding it's time to reduce the risks to pedestrians?

Various risk reduction features already exist, such as the underpass and traffic light controlled crossings on the Havant Road. Chichester and Havant have 20mph limits and pedestrianised town centres. A recent development concept for Emsworth proposed a one way system for the High Street and Queen Street. Such measures are expensive and take a long time to deliver with all the surveying, consulting, planning and bidding for funding. However Hampshire County Council has created a 'fast track option' for 20mph zones.

Understandably motorists dislike 20mph zones on straight clear roads with good visibility, but central Emsworth is different. Some would argue it is hard to exceed 20mph there already. Sadly not all drivers are considerate and safe, especially on dark evenings and in the wet as shopkeepers and residents will readily testify.

Residents and business owners should consider this idea and tell our councillors what we think. Time is not on our side.

Enjoy the walk from Emsworth westwards

Words by Maggie Gebbett

The King Charles III Coastal Footpath all around the coast of England has now been officially opened and is almost completed. Chichester Harbour even made lunchtime TV in February this year saying how good the NE coast path is in this area. Of course they didn't say that they hadn't quite finished the work in several places... including the stretch along part of the Emsworth shore to the west of the town as the NE path goes into Nore Barn Woods.

Work started there in October last year on the first section of work resurfacing and lifting the existing bridge over Nore stream. It was still not quite finished by February when the fencing and path surfaces needed finalizing to and from the bridge. The later stage of that Included adding a low fence round a section of protected land close to the beach on the western side of the bridge. New wooden signposts have also been added along the route now.

The second part of this project adds a new boardwalk along the beach. That started in March. Now in place it means that anyone walking along this route when the tide is high will be able to get along the existing concrete path from the end of Warblington Road, then step seamlessly on to the new boardwalk and shortly afterwards go on to the new path over the bridge and on to Nore Barn Woods. So there should be very few people forced to turn back, unless there is an exceptionally super-high tide and a very strong wind from the south!

Aquascience, the Romsey-based contractors who have carried out the project, have done a fine professional job and those staff working on the site have helpfully answered questions from those walking through the area. They also ensured hikers were safe if the work was at a critical stage. Alison Perry of Hampshire County Council was in charge of the organisation of this section.

Now that this project is finished there should be no more photos of people falling off the bridge into the stream or walkers wading along by the seawall at high tide.

Emsworth's Swifts Need Your Help

The South-East of the UK has lost 75% of its Swifts since 1994. This decline is due primarily to loss of nest sites. Swifts nest in gaps or cavities in buildings, especially under the eaves. When houses are renovated, or plastic soffits and fascias fitted, swifts often lose their nest sites. Modern buildings have no cavities that allow them to access a place to nest. Can you help by having a swift nest box on your house?

Swifts are clean, quiet neighbours that make no mess. They bring spectacular aerial action to our streets each summer.

Hampshire Swifts will supply and install a single nest box for you for £50 or a double box for £95. Please email info@hampshireswifts.co.uk with your name, address and phone number. www.hampshireswifts.co.uk

Swift Facts

- **Adult swifts spend about 9 months of the year flying continuously. They sleep, eat and mate on the wing.**
- **When swift chicks fledge, it will be about three years before they land again.**
- **Swifts return to the same nest site year after year.**
- **They are the fastest bird in level flight - nearly 70mph.**
- **They are only here for three months of the year, spending the rest of the year in Africa.**

A Lours

Dirty Business hits close to home

Words by Chichester Harbour Trust

The release of Channel 4's *Dirty Business*, the shocking docudrama based on the very real water pollution crisis, has drawn attention once again to the ongoing failures of the sewage treatment industry and its regulation. This is very timely for Chichester Harbour given an exceptionally wet start to the year with the winter of 2026 (December 2025 - February 2026) ranking among the wettest since records began in 1836, according to the Met Office. Southern England saw its fourth wettest winter, and its wettest in over a decade.

Highgrove Farm - a 300 house development

While we welcome the endeavours recently announced by Southern Water to address the problem of high groundwater levels - by tankering and by lining pipes throughout the district - the works to date present a small drop in the ocean given the scale of the problem we are now witnessing.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy, in conjunction with Chichester District Council, regularly monitors levels of e-coli and intestinal enterococci at 12 sites across the Harbour, comparing the levels with EU Bathing Water Standards. In February five of these sites failed to meet bathing standards. From 1 March the Chichester wastewater treatment works has been discharging continuously; 226 hours so far and the situation is ongoing. This is despite not having had any significant rainfall in this time – so the effects of high groundwater levels continue to be felt.

The implications for housing development in the Harbour area are very real – the Highgrove Farm development for 300 houses is underway, with Southern Water applying to remove waste by tanker due to lack of capacity in the wastewater system (see P2). This situation was foreseen by campaigners from the outset and is completely unsustainable.

The Chichester Harbour Trust continues to urge the water companies to do more to reduce storm discharges which have such a devastating effect on the Harbour, and we continue to work with partners through the Chichester Harbour Summit, led now by the Conservancy. Chairman Nick Backhouse says, "The Government's campaign to 'Build Baby Build' is completely nonsensical on the coastal plain given the challenges we face with water treatment and flooding – we need ministers to wake up and smell the sewage."

Real time information on sewage discharges from Southern Water's Rivers and Seas Watch site at riversandseaswatch.southernwater.co.uk.
www.chichesterharbourtrust.org.uk

Final Straw Foundation Expands Accreditation Champion Sustainability Across Industries

The Final Straw Foundation is proud to relaunch its environmental Accreditation scheme, expanding its scope beyond single-use plastics to help businesses, across any industry, tackle plastic waste and adopt broader sustainability practices. It remains a free accreditation with no fees, costs or re-certification.

Initially designed for the marine industry in partnership with the environmental arm of the RYA, The Green Blue, the accreditation has helped around fifty sailing clubs, training centres and marine businesses reduce single-use plastics and increase their sustainable credentials. Now, due to increasing demand, it is open to a wider range of industries, including offices, hospitality, sports clubs, retail, well-being, events and manufacturing, to support their environmental commitments.

There are three levels - Bronze, Silver, and Gold - that celebrate incremental improvements and long-term commitments, no matter where you start. With improved usability, the supportive free accreditation and accompanying resources, with clear guidance, improved online access, and the ability to track progress, make participation easy.

Businesses that join the scheme will enjoy a range of benefits, including an enhanced brand reputation, showing customers, suppliers and the public that they take sustainability seriously. Staff will be inspired by meaningful environmental initiatives that can extend beyond the workplace. The scheme will help businesses to prepare for future sustainability legislation and demonstrate compliance with environmental standards. Additionally, businesses that sign up will be able to access free resources and guidance, taking the guesswork out of sustainability with clear, actionable support.

Ready to take action, sign-up for free today at www.finalstrawcertified.org. Contact us at hello@finalstrawfoundation.org

Emsworth Horticultural Society

During March the committee welcomed new members at the Distribution Hut where they were shown all the garden related items that the EHS Hut stocks, all at reasonable prices.

Our first trip of the year was also in March when a full coach of EHS Members visited Kingston Lacey. We had a private tour of the garden with the Head Gardener which was arranged just for us. In April our first Members Open Garden takes place which will be in Prinsted - a chance to see a beautiful garden, opened just for our members, chatting to other gardeners while having tea and biscuits. A lovely way to spend a Spring day.

Our speaker on 23 April is Ben Cross of Crosslands Flower Nursery. This nursery is one of the largest growers left in the UK producing Alstroemeria. He will talk about his mission to challenge the UK's dependence on imported flowers. Our talks are free for members and are held at Emsworth Community Centre on the last Thursday of the month. Doors open for refreshments at 7.10pm; talk starts at 7.30pm. We welcome visitors who are charged £5.00

Interior of the EHS Distribution Hut

To join the EHS is only £10 per annum and you can join at the talk. Please visit our website www.emshs.org.uk

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Business News

Herbalist opens in Emsworth

Words by Jane Gregory

Galanthus is the name chosen by Rebecca Worthington for her new phytomedical (the use of plant-derived compounds for therapeutic purposes) practice and apothecary business at 5 High Street. Galanthus is the botanical name for a snowdrop, from the ancient Greek 'gala' (milk) and 'anthos' (flower).

There is plenty of evidence of the Galanthus flower around the comfortable clinic, with live plants on the windowsill in season and a lovely painting on the wall done by Rebecca's late mother. The whole family have been involved in setting up the new business, as well as many friends; the snowdrop emblem on Rebecca's business card was painted by her niece, and her partner built the counter unit. Rebecca grew up on her aunt's farm, where she first began learning from her aunt about herbal medicine, before completing her clinical training and professional registration as a medical herbalist.

The rows of apothecary jars displayed on the dresser provide a rainbow of colour, and it's from these that Rebecca prepares her herbal tea blends, tinctures, oils and creams. She also produces home fragrances and plant-based supplements. In addition to her clinical consultations, she hopes to offer educational classes through a group called The Serenity Circle, where members can learn skills including how to make up a herbal self-help kit, and how to prepare their own herbal oils.

Rebecca is keen to emphasise that she sees phytomedicine as complementary to orthodox medicine and not in opposition to it. She herself spent 20 years working in the NHS, mainly in a visual impairment clinic, supporting stroke patients who had lost sight.

Rebecca says that she has found the community in Emsworth welcoming and supportive and hopes that people will feel free to come and visit to find out more. Her hope is that clients will come to see her practice as a sanctuary, and a place 'where the power of plants is used to support and restore the natural balance of health and wellbeing'.

Galanthus, 5 High Street, Emsworth (entrance in School Lane)
www.galanthus-phytomedical.com
Tel. 07521 022266.

Rebecca is keen to emphasise that she sees phytomedicine as complementary to orthodox medicine and not in opposition to it.

Chalk River pops up again

Words by Jane Gregory

A new pop-up shop selling casual clothing and artworks has opened in North Street. Chalk River is the latest project for Emsworth resident Daniel Tidbury, who is already well known for his exhibitions of pottery and paintings on Emsworth Arts Trail. Daniel had originally planned to name the shop Emsworth Riviera, after the sunny coastal lifestyle here in Emsworth, but then decided on Chalk River in tribute to the River Ems, the chalk stream that flows through the town.

Chalk streams are rare and ecologically important freshwater habitats; of around 260 in the world, over 85% are found in England. While Chalk River is not directly affiliated with chalk stream conservation organisations, Daniel says that he hopes to raise awareness of their importance. These ecological concerns are reflected in Daniel's commitment to responsible sourcing and ethical production for the garments he sells. Among these are T-shirts, sweatshirts and hoodies that come in a wide choice of bright and pastel colours, as well as waterproof coats and beach robes. There's also a 'Juniors' range for children. Accessories are available too, including aprons and caps, beanies and pompom hats, all sporting the distinctive Chalk River logo designed by Daniel. He handprints all the garments, packs each order, and sometimes delivers them personally; a local click and collect option is available to reduce unnecessary travel.

A selection of Daniel's paintings and ceramics is displayed in the shop, featuring his colourful abstract designs. Daniel lives locally with his wife and two children and their cockapoo Willow, and the children attend school in Emsworth. Chalk River is located in the shop formerly occupied by *One For Ya Mum* tattoo studio, near the zebra crossing in North Street. Daniel has already updated the window signage, and plans to do the same to the shopfront exterior.

Daniel Tidbury with Willow

Chalk River, 26 North Street, Emsworth
www.danieltidbury.co.uk.

Loretta Coffee Bar

Words and photo by Jane Gregory

Distinguished by its splendid Ionic portico, the early 19th century Grade II listed building that houses Loretta Coffee Bar has been at various times a bookseller and stationer, and briefly Emsworth's Post Office.

The newsagent and café has recently been taken over by Mr Harsh Patel, also known as Ash. He explained to me the many plans he has to expand the range of items available in store, and to improve the shopping experience for customers.

Ash was born in Gujarat, India, but has lived in the UK since 2004; he has 20 years' experience in the business. He prioritises personal service, feeling that the friendliness which used to exist in banks and other local businesses has been lost; his aim is to make life easier for customers, especially those who are older, by avoiding the need for long periods of queuing for items such as cards and postage stamps.

Ash plans to rearrange the space so that although the popular café will remain, there will be more space for the expanded range of goods he hopes to stock. He intends to to start providing takeaway items like sandwiches, baguettes, cakes and puddings, as well as milk and bread, and there will also be ready meals, sweets and chocolate, and other competitively priced basics such as loo rolls.

The wide range of greetings cards will still be available, and perhaps even expanded. You can already buy stamps here, and Ash plans to stock cigarettes and tobacco products too.

On the newsagent side, a new feature is that magazines will be available for collection or delivery as well as newspapers. The store already offers PayPoint for the payment of bills such as Council Tax, gas and electricity top-ups, TV licences and water bills, and customers of some major banks can use the facility to deposit cash into their bank accounts. Mobile phone top-ups are available too. As Ash says, 'Customers will be able to use us as their local bank.'

Many things will not change, though; the business will still be called Loretta Coffee Bar, and the colourful signage will remain the same. The café will be open all day, and will be dog-friendly - and the delicious Italian cakes that Loretta's has always been renowned for will still be on sale, together with the Italian wines.

The colourful signage will stay the same under the new owners.

Loretta Coffee Bar, 3 High Street, Emsworth

Business News

Businesses opening and closing

Queenie's Tearoom at Emsworth station run by Queenie Butler-Hoskins closed in late March after trading for nearly four years.

Holloway Iliffe are marketing Unit 9, Palmers Road Industrial Estate. This is a 3,000 sq ft warehouse-type building which was previously used by BFES commercial catering engineers who have relocated to Portchester. Rental is £19,500 p.a.

Online property agent, I am the Agent, are marketing a 7,700 sq ft unit at Unit 2, Station Approach. Rental is £75,000 p.a. This unit was previously used by recycling firm Haztech Waste and for many years by engineering company Innova Design and Build.

One for ya Mum tattooist have closed their studio at 26 North St. They opened in 2017 having previously been based in Palmers Road. The 305 sq ft ground floor premises are currently being marketed by Fludes for £125,000 freehold.

InPost try again

A new set of parcel lockers has been installed by InPost outside Tesco, 17 North St, Emsworth. Last year InPost installed a much larger parcel locker unit outside the Co-op in the town centre. They did not initially seek planning permission and put in a retrospective application which was refused by Havant BC. Eventually the lockers were removed. At the time of going to press there does not appear to be a planning application submitted for this new structure. When contacted by The Ems, InPost declined to comment.

More bank closures

Lloyds Banking Group (Lloyds, Halifax, Bank of Scotland) will close the Chichester branch of Halifax on 1 June 2026. The Havant branch of Halifax closed in January 2026. The nearest Halifax branch after June will be in Waterlooville or Portsmouth.

Emsworth Loves Local – Small Business Markets

We're thrilled to announce that Brent Lodge Wildlife Hospital will be our charity partner for 2026. One of our highlights is our pre-loved jigsaw puzzles sale, running throughout the year. We would be immensely grateful for donations of jigsaw puzzles, which can be handed to Barbara Carthew at our monthly markets in Emsworth Methodist Church or you can contact Charlotte Markham on 07798 623667 to arrange a collection.

Our monthly markets take place every 3rd Saturday inside Emsworth Methodist Church

www.emsworthloveslocal.uk

Facts and figures

Legal minimum wage for over-21s to rise 4.1% in April 2026, from £12.21 to £12.71 per hour, with the wage for 18 to 20-year-olds rising from £10 to £10.85. The rate for those under 18 rises from £7.55 to £8 per hour.

Unemployment figures (Feb 2026)

Borough of Havant 2,565 (3.5%)

Emsworth 115 (2.1%)

Chichester DC area 2,515 (3.4%)

UK 1,717,150 (3.9%)

Inflation rate

The official consumer price inflation rate as calculated by ONS is 3.2%

In Feb 2021 it stood at 0.4%. www.ons.gov.uk

House prices

The average house price in the UK is £300,000. Average house prices in Emsworth vary from £430,000 to £468,000, depending on which property website is used. At the time of going to press the cheapest freehold house for sale in Emsworth was £300,000 with the most expensive being £2.5 million (4 bedroom 3,727 sq ft house in Bath Road) There were 10 £1 mill + houses for sale locally.

New Business

My Heavenly Candles

With a wide-range of scents, sizes and candles for different occasions My Heavenly Candles is a local, home-based business. I have been producing luxury, soy, scented candles with reiki healing properties since 2022 and I pride myself in the ability to bring a sense of calm and well-being to your home, allowing you to the opportunity to de-stress, relax and create a sense of harmony in today's hectic and stress-filled world. My mission is to help people's well-being through the using of high-quality, sustainable products that promote relaxation and peace. All ingredients are ethically sourced and the dedication to sustainability extends to every aspect of the business, as well as encouraging the re-use and recycling of packaging. It is not a large company so there is the guarantee that all candles are hand-made by me. Heavenly Candles are offering a 15% discount to readers of The Ems. Input EMS15 at the checkout stage. The code is valid until end of August 2026. For more information and to see my products email - www.myheavenlycandles.co.uk

(Editor. If you have started a new business The Ems would like to hear from you. We are happy to give you some free publicity. Contact: editor.theems@outlook.com)

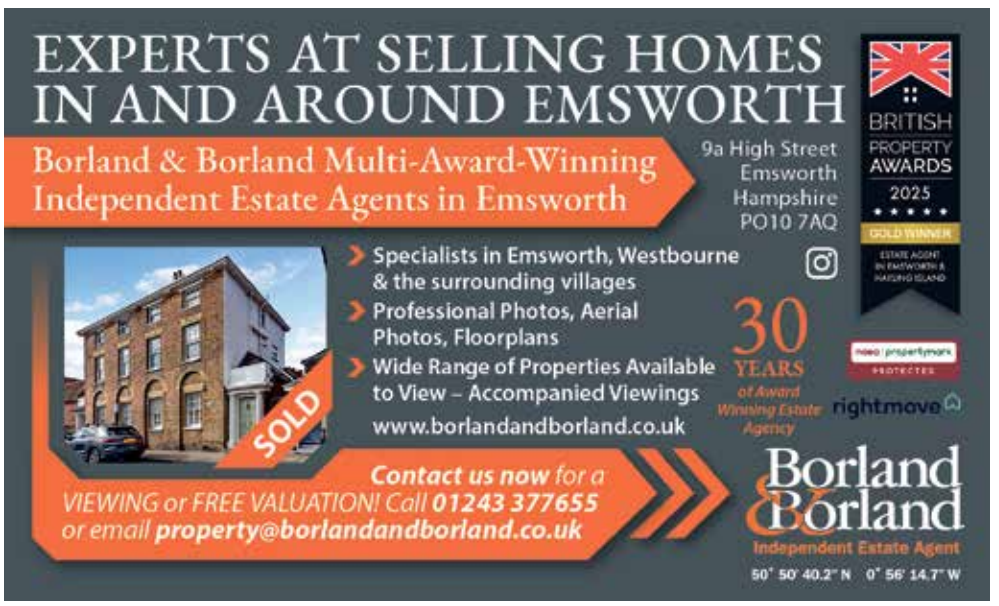
Successive Award Win for Borland & Borland Estate Agents

Borland & Borland, Emsworth's independent estate agent, have recently won The British Property Awards 2025 Estate Agent in Emsworth & Hayling Island, for the second successive year. The sales branch performed outstandingly throughout the extensive judging period, which focused on customer service levels. In comparison to their local competitors, Borland & Borland Estate Agent was independently assessed as providing outstanding levels of service. Contact Borland & Borland to book a property valuation or viewing: 01243 377 655 or property@borlandandborland.co.uk

www.borlandandborland.co.uk

Farmers' Market

The market is usually held on the third Saturday of each month from 9 am to 1 pm in the Square. The dates for the next few months are 18 April, 16 May, 20 June, 18 July.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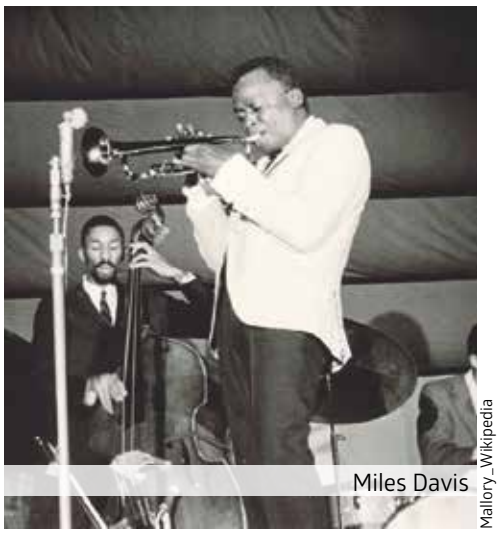
Arts & Entertainment

By Russell Bramley, Arts Correspondent
Email: russatemsart@gmail.com

Jazz comes to Emsworth - Chidham Village Hall

Harbour Records are presenting *A Tribute to Miles Davis - Kind Of Blue Live* on Sunday 26 April at Chidham Village Hall (aka The Old Malthouse). On 22 April 1959, at Columbia's 30th Street Studio in New York City, Miles Davis completed his iconic Jazz album *Kind Of Blue*, featuring his famous sextet. The album was released on 17 August 1959, and over 60 years later is still one of the most successful jazz albums of all time. Now, you can experience this album, and Miles Davis' other classic jazz recordings, recreated live on stage with a cast of outstanding jazz musicians.

Tickets are available securely online at www.wegottickets.com/event/687407 or you can purchase tickets at Harbour Records, High St, Emsworth.



Miles Davis Mallory_Wikipedia

Bench Theatre present *Calendar Girls* at The Spring, Havant

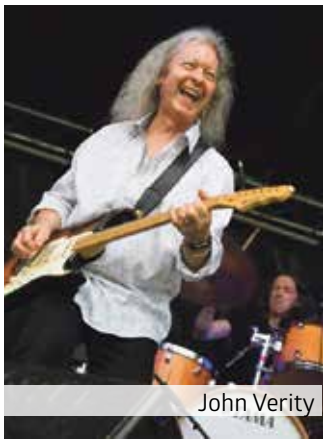
When Annie's husband John dies of leukaemia, her best friend Chris is determined to do something to honour his memory. Together they persuade their fellow members of the local Women's Institute to produce a charity calendar - with a daring twist. Instead of flowers and landscapes, the ladies themselves will feature, tastefully posing nude behind teapots, buns and knitting! Based on a true story it is a heartfelt tribute to the power of ordinary people to do something extraordinary. It is hard to believe that the release of the star studded movie with Helen Mirren and Julie Walters was 23 years ago. Those are big shoes to fill but I've seen Bench a few times now and they are versatile, professional and always nail it.

The ladies themselves will feature, tastefully posing nude behind teapots, buns and knitting!

Tickets: £14; £13 concessions; £10 under 25s. 7.30 pm on Thu 23/04 and Fri 24/04; 2.30 pm only on Sat 25/04; 7.30 pm on Wed 29/04 to Fri 01/05; 2.30 pm and 7.30 pm on Sat 02/05; www.thespring.co.uk/

The chance to see a true legend – Emsworth Sports & Social Club

1969 – you may think Vietnam war demonstrations – Apollo 11 'one small step' lands on the moon – Concorde's first test flight – the Beatles' last 'roof top' performance – *Midnight Cowboy* wins best film Oscar - and when all that was happening a 20 year old John Verity was gigging. He would move on to join Argent (*Hold Your Head Up* - we all know that one). John has also worked with the likes of Motorhead, Brian Connolly (Sweet) Colin Blunstone and The Searchers. John reformed The John Verity Band in 2001 and has been wowing the crowds ever since - and for one night only ... he's just down the road.



John Verity

The John Verity Band, Friday 8 May 2026; 7:30 pm; tickets £19.80; Emsworth Sports and Social Club, 43 - 45 Havant Rd 07904094981 info@emsworthssclub.co.uk

Award-Winning Emsworth Summertime Blues Festival Returns on June 20th with Headliner Dom Martin – Emsworth Sports & Social Club

The much-loved and award-winning Emsworth Summertime Blues Festival returns on Saturday, 20 June, bringing a full day of world-class blues music to the heart of Emsworth. This year's festival will be headlined by the internationally acclaimed Dom Martin, one of the most exciting and respected blues artists on the global circuit today. Renowned for its vibrant atmosphere, outstanding musicianship and strong community spirit, the Emsworth Summertime Blues Festival has earned its reputation as one of the UK's premier blues events. The festival has previously received industry recognition for both its programming and its contribution to live music culture, attracting blues fans from across the region and beyond.

For updates and more information, please follow the Emsworth Summertime Blues Festival on social media or visit www.emsworthmusic.club

Dom Martin Dubbel Xposure Photography

Funtington Players – Village Hall, West Ashling

Funtington Players' Spring offering is *The Perfect Murder*, a play by Hugh Janes adapted from a story by Jeffrey Archer and directed by Gill Lambourn. Who isn't fascinated by the possibility of someone getting away with the perfect murder? Now is your chance to find out how, or indeed if, it can be done!

Performances are from 14 – 18 April at the Village Hall, West Ashling - tickets available via the Box office. www.funtingtonplayers.org.uk

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By Russell Bramley, Arts Correspondent
Email: russatemsart@gmail.com

Arts & Entertainment

Art in an amazing form – *Avenue Q* -Theatre Royal, Portsmouth

A few years back I saw Michael Morpurgo's story *War Horse* brought to life by slick seamless puppetry, such an amazing skill to be invisible on stage.

With the recent merger of the Kings and New Theatre Royal, the award-winning Portsmouth Players - in their centenary year - are presenting the wild, hilarious world of *Avenue Q*. Enter the New York street where puppets and humans are trying to figure out life, love, and everything in between. With catchy songs, laugh-out-loud moments and surprisingly heartfelt stories, *Avenue Q* is the modern musical that audiences rave about. If you need a night of unmissable fun, *Avenue Q* has something for everyone... just maybe leave the kids at home!

Avenue Q is the modern musical that audiences rave about

26 - 30 May 2026
www.newtheatreroyal.com

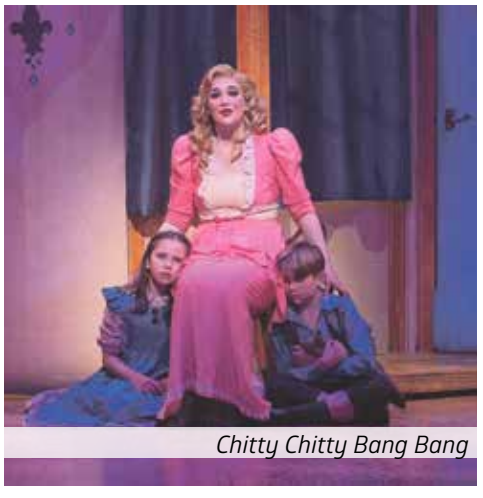
Chitty Chitty Bang Bang – Kings Theatre, Portsmouth

There are many amazing effects in the theatre: the transformation of the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*, the falling effect of Javert's suicide in *Les Miserables* - and the car in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. I grew up with this musical, know the songs and love it. When I saw the Kings Theatre's previous production of this timeless classic, we all waited with baited breath for the flying car. How did they do that? Simply the magic of theatre! The musical, based on the book by Ian Fleming, was last here in 2023. Again there's a strong cast including longstanding local talent John Bettesworth as villainous Baron Bomburst, bringing this much loved musical to life at

The Kings Theatre: 9-19 April.
www.kingsportsmouth.co.uk

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Kings Theatre



Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Feast of Fiddles

Review
Words by Jane Gregory

The Feast of Fiddles 31st Spring tour arrived at the Pallant Centre in Havant on 27 February. This was a new venue for a Wemsfest event; in previous years the band have performed at St James Church in Emsworth.

With six fiddle players lined up across the front of the stage surrounding leader and melodeon player Hugh Crabtree, they launched straight into a long and energetic set of jigs that made the best of the hall's excellent acoustics. On the far left was Phil Beer, also half of acoustic roots/folk duo Show of Hands; next to him Simon Swarbrick, nephew of the legendary Dave. Between him and Hugh was Mark Jolley, a relatively new member of the band; like most of the band members, he played a variety of instruments during the course of the evening.

Next came the only female member of the band, Marion Fleetwood. With a beautiful voice to match her skill on the fiddle, Marion sang about the Gypsy Queen in a bluesy minor key. Along with all the other band members, she was introduced by Hugh with a witty introduction that added even more enjoyment to the evening. Next to her were the stalwart duo of Tom Leary and Garry Blakeley. Tom has written many of the tunes played by the band and, like several other band members, also plays for Morris dancing.

Behind the front line were guitarists Dave Harding (who claims to have been playing with Hugh 'for centuries') and Martin Vincent, providing the driving beat along with drummer Dave Mattacks. Based in the USA, Dave has played with Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span, but also with Paul McCartney and Elton John.

This highlights the fact that you need to keep your wits about you with this band and 'expect the unexpected'. As well as folk and Morris tunes and songs, we enjoyed *Turkish Delightful*, which featured Dave Harding wearing a fez; *The Magnificent Seven* theme as a first half closer; a rousing tune from *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and a blast of Led Zeppelin.

Thanks to Mark Ringwood and the Wemsfest team for providing such a great evening.

Feast of Fiddles

Let's sing or not, it's up to you – Rowlands Castle

Wednesdays 2.30-4pm Church on the Green, Rowlands Castle.

It's fun and all-consuming looking out for things to promote in this column, especially when things just catch your eye like a poster in Rowlands Castle the other day that just stopped me in my tracks. I love the idea of social interaction and on a nice easy level this informal singing group where you don't have to sing, but can have coffee and cake and meet, greet and just enjoy being with people, might be just what we can enjoy and maybe need.

For details as shown call Sue Arnold 078312447806 or Sally Miller 07910300289

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Youth & Schools

Flags on display at Lift Off

Words by Shirley Farmer

There was great excitement at Lift Off when the Lord-Lieutenant for Hampshire, Mr Nigel Atkinson, paid a visit. He was greeted by Field Marshall Lord Richards of Herstmonceux, GCB CBE DSO DL, Lady Richards and John and Hilary Pritchard, Trustees of the John & Hilary Pritchard Trust.

Mr Atkinson joined teachers and staff from Bishop Luffa School, Chichester and Park Community School, Havant in a round table discussion. Talks centred on Lift Off's innovative teaching approach with students at risk of falling out of mainstream education and its importance in the light of the Government's recent white paper on education reform. Students served coffee and home-made biscuits created by them in the new kitchen.

Verity Tilley, Lead Teacher, accompanied the Lord-Lieutenant on a tour of the building where he met more students. Those in the art room showed paintings they were creating with feathers foraged locally; others talked enthusiastically about their studies and why they liked coming to Lift Off.

In the Real World Learning Centre, Martin Helyer, Architect, showed displays of the buildings, explaining the processes before, during and after renovation and construction. The entire project has been completed within a staggering 12 month period. Steve Williams,

Deputy Head at Bishop Luffa, described how the Centre is to be used to complement the teaching approach, and John and Hilary Pritchard outlined plans for Lift Off initiatives elsewhere. Everyone agreed how well Lift Off was integrating into Emsworth life. Several community groups have already offered support in introducing students to activities designed to broaden their horizons.

The Lord-Lieutenant concluded his visit by saying how much he had enjoyed his time at Lift Off and asked to be kept informed of its progress and other future developments.

Nigel Atkinson, Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire, with Lift Off student

The back of the Lift Off building

The music room

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Southbourne Junior pupils inspired by visit from World Record Breaking Adventurer

Pupils at Southbourne Junior School recently enjoyed an inspiring and memorable visit from ocean rower Jess Rowe, an ambassador for the Junior Duke personal development award scheme in which the school proudly participates.

A report by Year 6 pupils:

We were lucky enough to be visited by Jess Rowe. There was a buzz of excitement as she joined us over lunchtime to sign our Junior Duke books in the playground and we got to listen to her inspiring presentation. Jess is one half of the Seas the Day rowing duo who recently crossed the Pacific Ocean. During her visit, she told us all about life at sea and the disgusting food she had to eat. Did you know that while Jess and her teammate Miriam were rowing, they even grew vegetables like radishes and cabbages on top of their cabin?

Their daily routine was tough. At night, one of them would row for two hours while the other slept, but during the day they rowed together. A very funny fact is that sometimes, at night, they would even fall asleep while rowing.

On their six-month journey they had some incredible encounters. They saw a sperm whale, had jellyfish cling to their oars and dealt with many annoying flying fish. The first week of their original attempt didn't go as planned—they had to return to port because their rudder fell off. Jess's visit was inspiring and gave us a real sense of adventure, perseverance, and teamwork—the same values we learn about through the Junior Duke personal development award scheme. We can't wait for Jess and Miriam to visit us again in summer to celebrate the completion of our Junior Duke Awards with us.

Thorney Island – royal visit

On Thursday 26 February, His Majesty King Charles III visited Thorney Island. The children from Thorney Island School were invited to this special event and were excited to watch the 21 Gun Salute and be amongst the guests present for the Royal Walkabout. His Majesty had specifically requested to meet the children and when he walked over to them all you could hear were excited screams of 'He's coming over'. His Majesty spent time talking to the children and staff before moving on to speak to families of military personnel who are stationed on Thorney Island. The children and staff were extremely excited to be part of this once in a lifetime opportunity to meet The King.

Community Effort Revives School Pond

Words and photo by Paul Scales

This term staff, governors, parents and local volunteers came together to rejuvenate the pond area at Emsworth Primary School, transforming an overgrown space into a valuable outdoor learning environment.

The first working party saw 14 volunteers clear brambles and dense vegetation to uncover the original pond and make the area safe and accessible for pupils. The initiative was supported by the Friends of Nore Barn Woods, whose conservation experience helped guide the habitat work. The day's efforts quickly revealed encouraging signs of wildlife. Newts were spotted in the pond, while lizards and slow worms were found in the surrounding area - evidence that the site remains ecologically rich and worth protecting.

A subsequent working party was supported by local tradespeople who were able to repair a nature hide roof and fencing around the pond area. Volunteers from the Friends of Nore Barn Woods and Havant Borough Tree Wardens provided extra hands and advice on reviving the space. The school now hopes the repairs will allow for the pond to be used more regularly for outdoor lessons, giving children the opportunity to study nature first-hand as part of the curriculum.

Paul Scales, co-opted governor of Emsworth Primary School and Trustee of Friends of Nore Barn, explained to The Ems the school's need and ethos – *"The pond area had become overgrown and unsafe for children. With limited budget and maintenance staff, it had become difficult to maintain - a challenge many schools are facing. Working with the PTA (EPSA) and the wider Emsworth community has helped bring this space back to life for our pupils. My role with Nore Barn Woods showed me the potential of what community action can achieve."*

Rebecca Mitchell, Head Teacher of Emsworth Primary School, added: *"We're incredibly grateful to all the volunteers who have given their time and expertise. The children are already excited about how the pond will become part of their learning. We hope this natural space will spark their curiosity about wildlife and our local environment."*

Further volunteer sessions are planned as the project continues to develop, reflecting the strength of partnership between the school and the wider Emsworth community. The school will be looking at other projects over the coming months. If you are interested in knowing more, please email admin+workingparty@emsworth.hants.sch.uk or follow the school's Facebook page.

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Lindsay's Nature Notes

Size Isn't Everything!

Words and photographs by Lindsay Jerome

I thought I would give you some statistics about my garden which I find to be an oasis amongst so many barren ones in the area with patios or decking and maybe lawn but not much else. My garden measures 15 x 30 ft. Tiny - but productive!

It supports a colony of up to 70 Starlings - bathing up to seven at a time in my birdbath; Blackbird couple and another male; Blue Tit couple; Robin, Wren and Hedge Sparrow (aka Dunnock) who all gain a partner in the course of the year; flock of 8-10 Long Tailed Tits; Great Tit who gains a partner in the year; Firecrest; up to 6 Wood Pigeons; 2 Collared Doves; Coal Tit; Black Cap; Willow (I think) Warbler; House Sparrow couple and their 9 fledglings bred each year in bird brick house in the back wall of my house (another couple produce 9 in the front of house brick bird house) - devastated last year by Sparrowhawk couple. Apart from those 130-odd birds, my garden also supports several types of Hawker Dragonflies, Damselflies, several types of Bumblebee (including White-Tailed, Buff-Tailed and Common Carder), Honeybees, Ivy Bees, Leaf Cutter Bee, Masonry Bees, Dark-Edged Bee Fly, several types of Hoverfly including Mimic Hornet Hoverfly, Hornets, Wasps. Then there are the butterflies - Comma, Red Admiral, Gatekeeper, Holly Blue, Brimstone, Peacock, Large White, or Cabbage White, as I grew up knowing it; and, of course, my wonderfully tiny Mint Moth which flies by day. I did also see a beautiful shocking pink and lime Elephant Hawk Moth newly emerged from its cocoon on my Hebe shrub one year; plus more moths, including the strange T-shaped Common Plume one, and ones I'm sure I never see.

House sparrow eating hibiscus

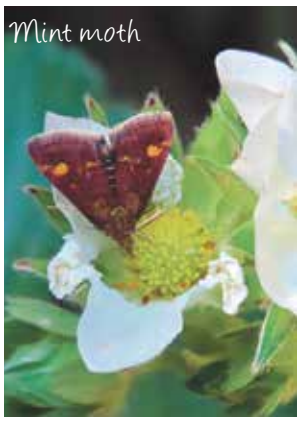
Peacock butterfly

It shows what you can achieve if you are not a tidy gardener: leave lots of leaf mulch to provide insects with food

White-tailed bumblebee

And all this wildlife in my tiny garden! It shows what you can achieve if you are not a tidy gardener: lots of leaf mulch to provide insects for food; hardly-pruned shrubs big enough to provide birds with a hiding place from predators; three birdbaths, a suet ball feeder and seed feeder and one bird table with food; a small pond, and a mature Ivy which provides flowers (nectar for Ivy bees) and fruit (black berries which the Pigeons and Blackbirds love).

My tiny front garden also supports some of the House Sparrows, the flock of Long Tailed Tits, Blue Tits, Great Tits, Firecrest and Coal Tit, who love the seeds of my large Hibiscus shrubs - the House Sparrows even seen eating the flowers and the black aphids which seem to appear every year on the Hibiscus. Like my back garden, it is full of shrubs making an enclosed space with its blue-green Cypress hedge and Box hedge, which I saved from the ravages of Box Tree Moth. One year, I woke in the early hours to noises and saw two fox cubs playing on and around my Box hedge, leaping along the top of it which I had shaped like waves, undulating, and playing hide and seek either side of it! I was later told by someone that foxes love the smell of Box.


Mint moth

Comma butterfly

So, you see what you can do with a tiny garden. Even a balcony could support a fair amount of wildlife given half a chance, so go for it. Leave messy stuff so wildlife can thrive. Here's to the messy gardener!

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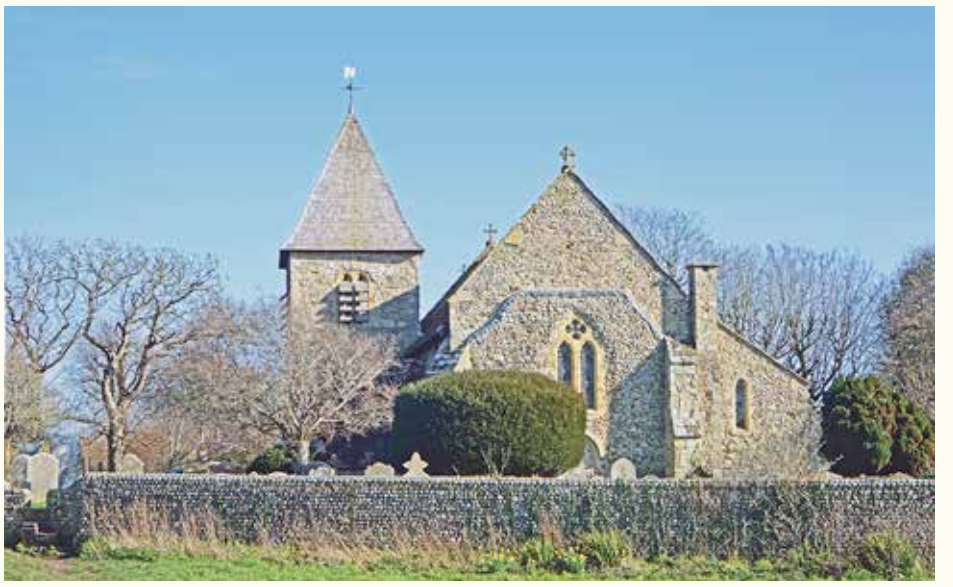
Part 29: West Wittering and East Head [3-4 miles]

Words by Lupo, photographs by Juliet Walker

With such a wet, muddy start to our walks this year, there was only one place that both dogs and humans could look forward to – a sandy beach. On the first sunny day an excited mixed group of us therefore headed to West Wittering. My owner decided this should be more of a challenge – a proper expedition – so rather than parking at the beach, she left the car some distance from the village centre and we walked. This worked well in the morning, but the way back a few hours later was a very different experience, as you will see...



Our first adventure was in the churchyard of St Peter and St Paul in the old part of the village. We needed to walk through it to reach the shore by a more interesting route, the first obstacle being the old stone stile leading to a meadow. This had a deep drop on the far side, which didn't bother Callie and me, but poor Charlie, with his little legs, launched himself hesitantly off a high step, somersaulted in mid-air and landed on his side in a very muddy puddle. He was luckily unfazed by this, but when he rolled on the beach later the mud became a magnet for sand – there was a lot of this as the sea was out - and he became a very textured dog.

We followed a path through a caravan site, but then our owners were stumped by a road with many Private signs so there was a lot of dithering – something we dogs don't do; we just get on with exploring. At last they decided - correctly - on the private road, going past cottages to a new finger post. Our direction led first across a swampy meadow and then to a well-made path where the view opened up in all directions. We followed this route round to East Head (National Trust), somewhere we know well and would recommend to any dogs. It is a sand spit and has two very different sides – one a long, deep beach (when the sea's not in) and the other more sheltered with a narrow strip of sand next to a big area of marsh plants and mud. In the middle of the two there are special sand dunes. When I was younger I scampered around them freely, particularly since there's much evidence of rabbits, but now you need to be on leads and stay on a boarded route, like good eco-dogs.

We went all round, doing much running on the main beach after balls, before heading past a row of coloured huts to the West Wittering Beach Café for lunch. Once on the balcony we dogs had a couple of biscuits then settled down by the table while the humans ate and relaxed, until it was time to walk back to the village along the main drive. We detoured to the church again, visiting the inside this time. It was very old but peaceful, so three respectful dogs walked round quietly.

On our trek back along the pavement my owner somehow fell heavily. Too many chips for lunch, perhaps? We dogs looked on from a safe distance, a bit embarrassed. One of her front paws was looking odd and she didn't seem happy about things, but eventually we all got a lift back to our car. Ignoring that blip, it had been a wonderful walk. We love sandy beaches!

News from our MP

Joining police in Emsworth to tackle shoplifting

I recently went on patrol in Emsworth to find out how police are tackling shoplifting, after calling on them to prioritise shoplifting reduction. I met up with PC Dawson, Designated Neighbourhood Officer for Emsworth, to walk around the town centre and see first-hand how retail theft is being treated as a priority.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary is focusing on prosecuting repeat offenders and using CCTV appeals to identify suspects. Businesses in Emsworth can also sign up to UK Partners Against Crime (UKPAC), an AI-powered app that can be used to report shoplifting, share intelligence, and identify offenders. But I also believe it's very important that our police officers are seen out and about in the community.

It's why I called on Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary to implement the Local Bobby Scheme, which ensures the public have access to a named police officer who is also a visible presence. To contact your Local Bobby PC Dawson by phone or email, go to www.AlanMak.org.uk/LocalBobby and type in your postcode.

I welcomed approval for a new Banking Hub in Havant following my successful campaign backed by local residents. I've been working hard to ensure residents can continue to access in-person banking services when bank branches close. I met the Treasury Minister responsible for Banking

Alan Mak on patrol in Emsworth with PC Dawson

Hubs in Parliament to press the case for our area and now I'm continuing to campaign for a Hub in Emsworth.

I accused Labour-controlled Havant Borough Council of a covert cash grab over car park charges. In 2025 I campaigned against the introduction of charges at car parks across the borough, including Emsworth, that were previously free. I launched a petition that also opposed charges being brought in on Sundays and bank holidays.

The council was forced to put its plans on hold. But now the car park cash grab is back. HBC has decided to plough on with the charges and has quietly installed signs with tiny writing in its car parks. I'll continue opposing these charges, which are a result of poor financial decisions by Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green councillors. If you agree with me, please sign my petition at www.alanmak.org.uk/parkingcharges

The best ways to stay up to date with the work I'm doing as your local MP all year round are to follow my social media accounts, especially Facebook (www.fb.com/AlanMakHavant), and sign up for my weekly residents' email community news update. I'm providing free St. George and Union flags to constituents. To get yours, apply online at www.alanmak.org.uk/Flag.

You can also share your views on local and national issues with me by completing my new online survey at www.alanmak.org.uk/survey

Finally, I was honoured to win Conservative MP of the Year at a prestigious Parliamentary awards ceremony. I'd like to thank the residents of Emsworth for your continued support!

Alan Mak MP, Member of Parliament for the Havant Constituency

Would you like to go on a tour of Parliament and meet me for a Q&A session? Please register your interest at http://www.alanmak.org.uk/Tours

ADVERTISEMENT

Members Annual Open Exhibition

Words by Carrie Davidson

We were fortunate to be able to welcome Alan Mak MP to open our Annual Exhibition at The Spring in Havant on Wednesday 11 February.

Spring Season
The season continues to be active with many successful talks and competitions. Notable talks were from talented photographers focusing on architecture, astrophotography and waterscapes. There was also a very successful Members Evening with more experienced photographers demonstrating how they achieved their final image in a 'show and tell' session.

Upcoming Season
Details of upcoming talks can be found on the home page of our website and include *Photographing Predators and Scavengers, Infrared Photography* and *Street Photography*. The season will conclude in May with the Best Print and PI of the year Competition. Regular Evening outings will then take place from Mid-May throughout the Summer offering members an opportunity to socialise and share photographic knowledge and skills.

The club meets every Tuesday at Emsworth Community Centre starting at 7.30 pm and new members are welcome throughout the year. Havant Camera Club is the perfect place to learn, grow and share a love of photography.

Full programme and further details can be found at www.havantcameraclub.co.uk. or just visit us on a Tuesday evening to see what we offer.

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Heritage

Press Gangs

Words and pictures by Mike Blatch

Legalised assault and kidnapping

Press gangs, or naval impressment, were a terrifying reality for young men, particularly during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. War with France was constantly brewing and once the Napoleonic Wars began the need to keep the navy fully manned drove gangs to expand their reach. Although already widely practised, press gangs were formally legalised by an Act of Parliament in 1563. The Act allowed the navy to seize sailors and sometimes civilians to serve aboard ships. When Elizabeth 1 passed the Vagrancy Act in 1597 it allowed vagrants and undesirables to be sent directly onto the Royal Navy's ships.

Portsmouth was a major naval centre with jurisdiction to press-gang men along the south coast. It was a brave man who drank in the dockside taverns or wandered the streets at night when the navy needed recruits. The press gangs had a ruthless reputation and would seize men at will, even from merchant ships that were visiting the port. When demand for manpower was high, 'hot presses' were organised. This often involved a gang, led by a lieutenant, going out in considerable numbers, normally to raid coastal towns. The gangs would surprise groups of men in targeted locations and the encounters were usually violent and uncompromising. The gangs often used boats to land at coastal towns but this could give notice to the wary residents, so men on horses or foot would sometimes arrive in advance to catch people off-guard.

The King's shilling

There is a popular anecdote about 'taking the king's shilling' by accident in your pint of beer. This was, I'm sorry to say, extremely unusual and broadly speaking a myth. The true nature of press-ganging men tended to be violent and direct. Knocking men unconscious and kidnapping them was much more practical than finding a moment to subtly slip a shilling into a drink.

Emsworth encounters

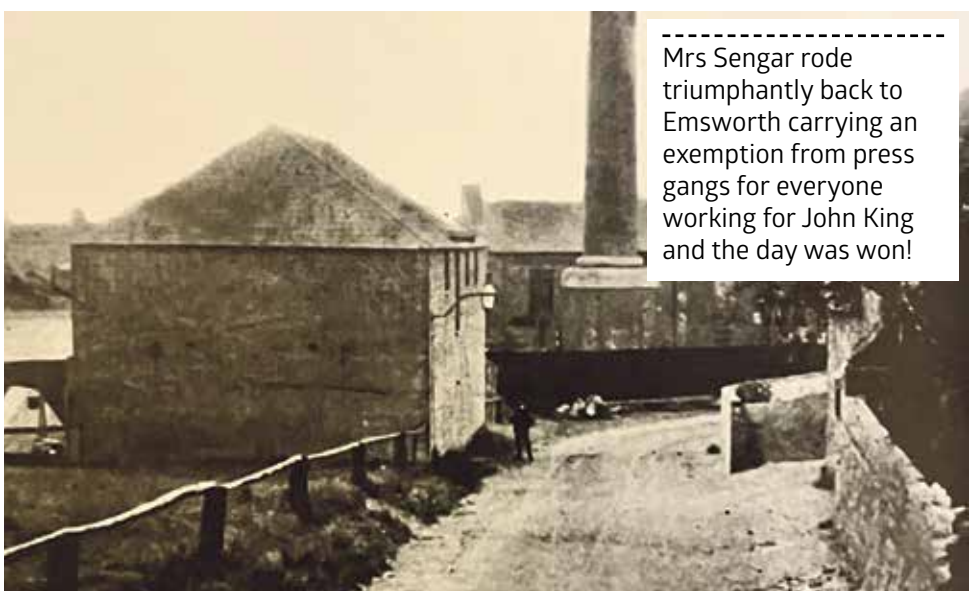
In the later part of the 18th century, John King had a very successful boatyard at the end of Sweare Lane (now called King Street after the man himself). The yard built boats of all shapes and sizes, with a large part of his business dedicated to supplying the Royal Navy in Portsmouth and Greenwich. King supplied naval barges to carry troops out to the men-of-war ships. A typical barge was rowed by 20 sailors and carried up to 40 marines. The yard also repaired equipment and produced blocks, tackle, capstans, and all manner of ship supplies. The John King Shipyard was a goldmine for the navy, not only for the supplies but for the skills of the shipwrights and mariners John King employed.

Late one afternoon a Portsmouth press gang approached the gates of Kings Yard and demanded workmen. John King immediately closed the gates and taking up a hatchet warned that any man who laid a hand on the gates would lose that hand. The head of the gang said they would wait and seize men as they left for dinner, but no one left. John King kept all his men behind the gates and armed them sufficiently to deter any attempted assault on the yard. He fed them bread, cheese and beer and they made themselves as comfortable as possible for the night. In the meantime, John King sent a courageous woman, called Mrs Sengar, down to the Admiralty in Portsmouth. She carried a message from King: if Portsmouth needed supplies from him then he needed shipwrights and the protection of everyone that worked for him. If they would not agree to this, then he could not agree to supply their goods. Mrs Sengar rode triumphantly back to Emsworth carrying an exemption from press gangs for everyone working for John King and the day was won!

Caricature of a press gang, 1780

Whilst King's men survived this encounter and subsequently enjoyed exemption, other young men from Emsworth were not so lucky. In the extracts from Mr Cobby's diaries in the late 1700s, he tells of the fear local men had of the gangs. One newly married girl of just 16 lost her husband to the press gangs and he did not return until she was 22. The experience often changed men mentally and physically and made the task of earning a living when - or if - they returned very difficult. Mr Cobby talks of numerous close encounters, of older men keeping a lookout while the fishing boats went out and even of young men removing fingers to gain exemption. On a more positive note, one young man called Bridge was rescued by his quick thinking sweetheart. He was in the barge down at the quay waiting to be taken away to Portsmouth when she sweet talked the lieutenant into allowing her one final kiss with the man she loved. She kissed him, then pulled him hard over the side of the boat shouting, "Run, you lubber, run," which he did very fast and escaped. Mr Cobby goes on to say that the couple then raised a very large and happy family!

Press ganging was eventually made illegal in 1835.



Mrs Sengar rode triumphantly back to Emsworth carrying an exemption from press gangs for everyone working for John King and the day was won!

Round Up

Emsworth Community Centre

Update on the repairs and restoration after the roof fire.
All are now going according to plan and the repairs should be finished by the middle of April.

Regular Activities
They are all still available so pop into the office and ask for a *What's On* leaflet or check our website to see the activities including all the details you need.

If you fancy starting a new activity or want to extend an existing one, there is always room for more. Room hire still starts at a great low price. We are also booking rooms for parties and special events at very reasonable prices.

Tech Aid is going very well with many happy customers getting to understand their mobile devices. We are all volunteers with technical abilities and will be in the café at the centre every Wednesday 11-12

Parents/Carers Baby time and Rhyme time in the library is still going strong.

Visiting the library, meeting up with friends.
The Galley Café is a great place to meet. Open on Tuesday and Friday morning 10-12. It is a great little space and is open to all the community.

Events coming between April and July 2026
Jazz Night: 18 April. The Almost Big Band are back for another toe tapping and swinging night. Doors open 7:30–11:00 pm; £10 entrance; bar available.

Music night: Friday 29 May, doors open 7.30. AstroModa, a local girl band, in aid of the Community Garden. Entrance £12 non-members; £10 members, if you purchase your ticket at the centre office. Table nibbles and a bar. Come and join us and support a local band and a local community.

Caribbean Night: Saturday 27 June, doors open 7.30. Steel band with a Rum & Cocktail bar, BBQ, entrance £20; tickets available from the centre and online. Loud shirts and tropical dress optional!

Our Community Cinema is at the heart of our social activity programme. Showings are 3:30 and 7:30 always twice a month on a Monday, but not regular set dates. Check out our website for all information, including trailers, times and dates.

www.emsworthcommunitycentre Info@emsworthcommunitycentre.org.uk 01243 373805 (10 am -2 pm)

Emsworth Museum

Lecture - *Tudor Places*
The final lecture in Emsworth Maritime and Historical Trust's 2025/26 programme will be given by Rachel Delman on *Tudor Places* on Thursday 7 May at 7:30 pm in Emsworth Community Centre. Tickets are available from Bookends in Emsworth.

Rachel's prize-winning research on late medieval women's architectural patronage has been published in several leading academic journals, and she has previously collaborated with heritage organisations, including Historic Environment Scotland and the Historic Coventry Trust, to bring medieval women's stories to non-specialist audiences. Her monograph on elite women's residences in late medieval and early Tudor England is forthcoming with Oxford University Press.

Exhibition - *Margaret Pole and Warblington Castle*
Rachel's research has been one of the inspirations for this temporary exhibition in Emsworth Museum which will run to the end of May, with a pause during the Emsworth Arts Trail.

Black Rod
One of the projects at Emsworth Museum during the past winter has been the preparation of the display of the Black Rod uniform worn by Admiral Sir Richard Scott Thomas, which was given to the Museum by the Thomas family after Sir Richard's death. The Museum has purchased a museum-specification mannequin designed to fit the uniform. The display includes a replica of the insignia of the KCB awarded to Sir Richard.

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A Warm Welcome Awaits at Prinsted Care Home, near Emsworth

Discover a peaceful haven at Prinsted Care Home, where comfort, care and community come together to create a true home from home. Ideally located within walking distance of the charming villages of Emsworth and Southbourne, Prinsted offers a tranquil setting with easy access to local amenities and coastal surroundings. Open 24 hours a day, our dedicated and compassionate team provides high-quality care tailored to each individual resident. Whether for short-term respite, long-term residential care or convalescence stays, we ensure every resident receives the support they need in a safe and welcoming environment.

Our home features freshly cooked food, spacious lounges and dining areas overlooking beautifully landscaped gardens, offering peaceful spaces to relax and socialise. We provide both single rooms and double rooms for couples, with the opportunity for residents to personalise their space with familiar furniture and treasured belongings to help them feel truly at home. At Prinsted Care Home, we actively encourage residents and their families to be involved in shaping the environment, welcoming ideas and suggestions to continually enhance our home.

We also invite you to join our weekly coffee mornings, held every Wednesday at 11am. To find out more, visit www.springfieldcare.co.uk

Emsworth's Village Voices - now in its 14th year - New members welcome

Vince Lavender Photography

In September we will celebrate 14 years of singing together. Our lovely band of singers are currently getting to grips with a great selection of songs in anticipation of our Summer Concert in Southbourne Village Hall on Saturday 13 June at 7.30.

We have room for more choir members - can we tempt you? If you have had experience in singing in 4-part harmony from musical scores, perhaps you could be inspired to find out more about us? Our Sopranos, Altos, Tenors and Basses rehearse together on Wednesday evenings in the Methodist Church in Emsworth. In particular, our Tenor section (7 members) and our Bass section (8 members) would welcome some newcomers, so, gentlemen, you need not have fear of being alone.

We have two Alto and two Soprano sections, and new members will be welcome to join these sections too. We sing a wide variety of songs, an eclectic mix, both new to us and from our repertoire. We hold two concerts each year and it's our choir that leads the Lobster Pot Carols on the Quay in Emsworth each December.

The choir is run by the members and is non-profit making; our subscriptions are low and include all scores new to the choir. Tempted? Give Mo a call on 07922 098216 for a chat or email Rob Wemyss: membershipsecretary@emsworthvillagevoices.org

Upcoming Events

EMSWORTH COMMUNITY CENTRE
PRESENTS Charity Number: 1181509
LET'S DANCE
IN AID OF EMSWORTH COMMUNITY GARDEN (VICTORIA ROAD)
FRIDAY 29TH MAY
7:30PM - 11:00PM
LICENSED BAR & SNACKS
TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE, FROM BOOKENDS AND FROM OUR OFFICE
ROCK YOUR HEART OUT WITH GIRL BAND ASTROMODA!
www.emsworthcommunitycentre.org.uk
£10 FOR MEMBERS FROM OUR OFFICE
£12 FOR NON MEMBERS
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Village Voices
Summer Concert
Our songs for warm, summer evenings
Saturday 13th June 2026
Southbourne Village Hall
at 7.30pm
Doors open 7.00pm
Concert starts 7.30pm
Entrance £10.00
Wine, beer and soft drinks available
For tickets please
call: 07827 910298
email: tickets@emsworthvillagevoices.org
visit: Bookends, Emsworth (CASH ONLY)
or on the day subject to availability.
Please note: ticket numbers are strictly limited to 100.
Please purchase in advance to avoid disappointment.
Exit collection for our local branch of the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.
www.emsworthvillagevoices.org

Emsworth Residents Forum

Letter from the Chair

Words by Dwynwen Stepien,
Chair of the Emsworth Residents Forum

When does Spring Start?

Even though the equinox has passed and the calendars—meteorological or astronomical—determine their own starting points, the true beginning of spring is something our senses tell us is on the way. A feeling of renewed energy, optimism, of better things to come.

And this year, there's plenty in Emsworth to feel optimistic about. The restoration of the much-loved 18th century building on the High Street—the old doctor's surgery—is now complete, and the town is welcoming the pupils of LiftOff, a new educational provision for young people (see P20). The Community Centre is preparing to reopen the old school rooms after last year's devastating fire, thanks to the hard work of trustees, staff, volunteers and supporters. We're marking the 25th anniversary of the Arts Trail, the museum is opening its doors again, and both the football and cricket clubs are gearing up for a new season. Boats are returning to the harbour and a new Community Outreach session for people living with dementia and their carers is launching in town. These are just some of the reasons to be cheerful, along with the days growing lighter.

Of course, spring also brings change of a different kind. The government's announcement about local government reorganisation has raised plenty of questions. Is it simply moving the chairs, or could it bring some real improvements? A new South East Hampshire authority of more than half a million people might offer better integration of services like social care, transport and education. But what will it mean for towns like Emsworth? If the proposals go ahead, we'll be grouped with parishes such as Clanfield, Horndean and Rowlands Castle.

This could be a real opportunity to form new parish councils across the authority which would help local communities have a clearer voice in shaping priorities close to home. The Forum's well supported campaign for a Parish Council has been positive. We have worked well with Havant Borough Council who are undertaking a community governance review. We look forward to see how we can develop strong options for how a parish council would benefit all residents.

And then there's the exciting expression of interest for Town of Culture 2028, backed by many local groups. Even if we're not successful this time, the process itself builds momentum—and could help lay the groundwork for our own Emsworth 800 Celebration.

It's easy, at times, to look at the wider world and feel weighed down by events far beyond our control. But spring reminds us to look up, to notice what's growing, to take heart in the things we can build together. Spring rarely arrives all at once. It unfolds—quietly, steadily, determinedly. Much like our town.

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If you run a local business then why not consider advertising in The Ems. Prices start from £40 for a 1/16 page advert up to £320 for a half page. We offer a 20% discount if you block book for four consecutive editions.

Emsworth Residents Forum

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Autumn 2026	Friday 25 September	Thurs 8 October
Winter 2027	Wednesday 23 December	Thurs 7 January
Spring 2027	Friday 26 March	Thurs 8 April

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Ellie Turnbull (Youth) 01243 374893 Youth.erf@gmail.com

Dan Grove - (Environment)

Andrew Caple

ERF PUBLIC MEETING DATES

Election Hustings

Tuesday 28 April 2026. Refreshments available from 6.30 pm. Meeting starts 7 pm, Emsworth Baptist Church

A chance to meet some of the candidates for the local elections due to be held on Thursday 7 May 2026.

AGM

Thursday 11 June 2026. Refreshment available from 6.30 pm. Meeting starts 7 pm, Emsworth Community Centre

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Youth report

By Ellie Turnbull, ERF lead on Youth

During the last quarter the ERF have held two activity events for young people. The first one attracted nearly 40 young people who really engaged with the activities and there was a lively buzz throughout the Community Centre.

At lunchtime they enjoyed their pizzas and then did an exercise to identify what they thought was good about Emsworth for young people and then what they would want to make it even better. The results were very interesting and will be used to influence future activities. The second one was a follow up to continue to develop ideas for the future. They also did a questionnaire on activities in the park during the summer. This will be used by Horizon Leisure to set the programme.

The Young Quilters group have met several times as they are making a quilt to be displayed at Bourne Quilters summer show. This project has enabled them to develop their skills and learn new ones. It has been great to watch them use their imagination and design skills. These events are dependent on the many Bourne Quilters who give their time to work with them on a one-to-one basis.

Join us on 30 May for activities and a tasty lunch

Created by ChatGPT

Dates for the diary

The next activity event will be held at Emsworth Community Centre on 30 May from 10 am to 2 pm - an opportunity to play dodgeball, Unihoc or take part in a Nerf war. There will be Table Tennis and Table Football. There will also be a quiet room for craft and board games. At lunchtime pizzas will be served followed by fresh fruit and the good news is the chocolate dip will be back.

Planning is well advanced for activities in the park during the summer holidays. Horizon Leisure is developing a programme of activities which are likely to include tennis, dodgeball, pickleball and cricket; the final programme will be announced nearer the time. They will be run in Emsworth Recreation Ground on 5,12,19 and 26 August from 10 am to 1 pm.

More details can be requested from youth.erf@gmail.com.

Can you help us?

Volunteers wanted

The ERF is lucky to have an enthusiastic working group for young people and a larger group of volunteers who help run events. We are looking to increase the membership of the working party. We meet for a couple of hours every two months. If you are interested in giving young people the opportunity to meet up with their peer group and have fun please consider joining us. We also always need volunteers to run activities. If you would like to find out more contact youth.erf@gmail.com

Business Development (volunteer)

The Ems is looking for someone to develop relationships with existing advertisers and other local businesses. We want to ensure that our advertisers' needs are being met and to encourage other businesses to advertise with us. The role would involve keeping in regular contact with advertisers and reaching out to new businesses.

If you are comfortable contacting businesses this could be an interesting volunteer post. For more information please contact editor.theems@outlook.com

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By Suzy Gardiner, Sports Correspondent
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Grandmaster visits Emsworth Chess Club

Words and photo by Phil Pinto

English Grandmaster Daniel Fernandez gave a full talk on games from the recent Tata Steel tournament.

I have provided a video of the talk publicly on the Emsworth Chess Club Facebook page. Daniel then played 20 club and ex-club members simultaneously with alternating black and white colours playing in a clockwise rotation. He won all 20. Some going!

Grainne Rason, Emsworth local councillor opened the event. Josh Seal, 15, was awarded a signed chess book, written by Daniel, which I donated for playing the best game. Amazingly, Daniel then took the ferry to the Isle of Wight to play in an Open chess blitz competition the same evening and won that event by a clear point.

Charlie Staples paid for all the food - a generous, much appreciated gesture - for enjoying being a club member for three years. Chichester Chess Club kindly lent me 10 chess sets and boards.

Club night is on Thursday from 7:30 pm at Emsworth Sports and Social Club, 43 Havant Road, Emsworth www.emsworthchessclub.co.uk/

Innovations Fitness Marks 17 Years of Transforming Lives in Emsworth

Founded in Emsworth, Innovations Fitness has grown from a small outdoor training group into a thriving fitness community, known for its inclusive approach and supportive atmosphere. Catering primarily for adults of all abilities and ages, the company has built a reputation for making fitness accessible, enjoyable, and sustainable.

The business has delivered thousands of sessions, from its signature military-inspired boot camps to buggy fitness classes designed for parents. Despite changes in the fitness industry, including the rise of online workouts and shifting customer habits, Innovations Fitness has remained committed to its core values: community, consistency, and results.

Owner George Turner reflected on the journey, saying the milestone is "not just about the years, but about the people. Seventeen years is something I'm incredibly proud of, but it's really about the community we've built. We've seen people come in with no confidence, no fitness background, and completely transform their lives - physically and mentally. That's what keeps us going."

The company's outdoor sessions have become a familiar sight, bringing together groups of like-minded individuals who train in all weather conditions. Members frequently highlight the social aspect as a key reason they stay, forming friendships alongside improving their fitness.

As it looks ahead, Innovations Fitness plans to further develop what it offers while staying true to its grassroots ethos. With a loyal client base and a strong presence in the local area, the future appears just as active as the past 17 years.

All enquires to info@innovationsfitness.co.uk or find us on Facebook.

Emsworth Men's Shed; Community Centre Car Park

In a recent visit to the Emsworth Men's Shed, I was met as always with a warm welcome and good humour. The men and women who volunteer at the centre, four mornings a week, continue to repair and recycle items which find new and happy homes.

Since the fire at the Community Centre, some of the roof tiles have been used by the inventive team to produce bird boxes. Working with St James' School, 16 flat packs of tiles, wood, nails and hammers were sent for the school children to assemble. This proved an incredibly popular activity. Another example of their work can be seen at St James' Church where the planter placed underneath the information board is now blooming with spring bulbs.

The Men's Shed team meet on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 10am – 1pm. Do call in if you are interested in joining their activity or you have items to donate, repair, or purchase. New and interesting items for sale are always worth seeing.

See https://emsworthmensshed.co.uk/ for the latest news. Email: Emsworthmensshed@gmail.com.

New to Martial Arts?

Welcome to kickboxing in your local area with ARO Fitness Kickboxing. We currently run classes in Westbourne and Cowplain, with new locations launching in Chidham and Bedhampton this May.

Our classes are structured by age group, with a variety of class times available across our locations:

- Lil' Ninjas (ages 3–6)
- Champions (ages 6–12)
- Teens (13–17)

Lil' Ninjas kickboxing class

ARO Fitness Kickboxing is dedicated to helping children and adults build confidence, improve fitness, and develop important life skills in a fun, safe, and supportive environment. Our mission is to empower the everyday individual with top-quality, affordable martial arts, kickboxing, and fitness experiences. Our focus is on nurturing individual potential, driving towards personal excellence, and enhancing overall well-being. We commit to providing a safe space where goals are met with enthusiasm and support, ensuring that every member has the opportunity to thrive and achieve their best in a setting of mutual respect and encouragement.

For more information or to book a class: Tel: 07488 318906 info@arofitnesskickboxing.co.uk https://arofitnesskickboxing.co.uk/

Bowls is for all at Emsworth Bowls Club

Bowls may have an image problem, usually being labelled as an old people's pastime. It may be an easily paced, contemplative game, but it is a game for all. Indeed, one of the commonest things new bowlers say is, 'I wish I'd started this years ago.'

Its simple rules can be learned quickly and the basic skills are easily picked up, but through practice they can be developed to whatever level of skill you desire. It is both an individual and a team game and offers a couple of hours' beneficial exercise in pleasant surroundings. For competitive members, league and competition matches are played regularly.

If you doubt any of these claims they can all be tested by coming along to our open days - 9 and 16 May, 10am to 4pm. We'll provide all the equipment and tuition. Give it a try - you never know!

Emsworth Bowls Club is situated at the Recreation Ground, Horndean Road Emsworth. Roger Mills 07914769903 cerftainly@ntlworld.com

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